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ABSTRACT

Brief, two-page papers are presented on 33 educational topics of interest to community college faculty, administrators, and staff. The following topics are considered: (1) strengthening the humanities; (2) common behavioral cycles evidenced in student-teacher relations; (3) irreducible factors for teaching and learning; (4) understanding problems of disabled students; (5) time management; (6) the future of community colleges; (7) teacher peer observation; (8) student perceptions on effective instruction; (9) perspectives on academic advancement and stagnation; (10) student retention methods; (11) theories of learning; (12) strategies for working with Middle Eastern students; (13) using positive language to promote student development; (14) educational quality; (15) feedback and calibration; (16) community colleges' legal responsibilities toward disabled students; (17) college credits and credentials; (18) teaching listening skills; (19) effective lecturing; (20) curriculum planning for the future; (21) suggestions and guidelines for lecturing; (22) improving student writing; (23) student assessment techniques and criteria; (24) computers and liberal education; (25) preparing course syllabi; (26) community college goals; (27) test-taking skills; (28) dealing with information overload; (29) the role of community colleges in helping individuals cope with change; (30) teacher responsiveness to students; (31) faculty evaluation; (32) a cognitive learning model; and (33) holiday humor. (AYC)

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VOLUME III
Numbers 1 - 33

Karen Watkins
Editor

National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development
North American Consortium

The University of Texas at Austin
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1981

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Karen Watkins

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Vol. III, no. 1

STRENGTHENING THE HUMANITIES

What is happening to the humanities in the two-year college? They seem to have few friends. Most administrators, reasoning that their best response to community needs is to offer the programs that generate the highest enrollments, abandon their educational authority to the marketplace. External support is no greater. Federal legislators appropriate hundreds of millions for career education while state legislators denounce "frill courses." And the students flock to occupational programs because they are told not to graduate without training in a particular skill.

For advocacy we must look to the real proponents of the humanities--to the faculty who have some commitment to the field in which they spend their working life. Even among these protectors there are signs of despair. While some instructors are clinging vigorously to their bastions of liberal thought, others have become disillusioned and uncommitted, discouraged by shrinking enrollments, working conditions and alien ideas guiding their institutions.

The Center for the Study of Community Colleges under the sponsorship of the National Endowment for the Humanities conducted a nationwide survey of two-year college faculty teaching courses in literature, history, foreign languages, political science, philosophy, and a dozen other disciplines typically placed under the humanities rubric. The idea was to assess the status of the humanities and determine what might be done to enhance them. An eleven-page questionnaire was sent to a carefully selected sample of 2,384 full time and part time instructors in 156 colleges; 84 percent responded. The questionnaire sought information on how the instructors in a discipline related to each other, to their students, and to their professional associations. It also assessed job satisfaction and desires for professional development. Faculty were asked about whom they considered their reference groups, what they thought about the humanities, how they taught, and what they needed to strengthen their activities. After compiling the results of this survey, the Center made two assumptions: *the humanities must be maintained as part of the community college offering* and *the humanities can be effectively and immediately strengthened through interventions with the faculty who teach them*. The following recommendations were then made to college leaders, university program directors and federal agency heads:

- Two-year colleges must attract support for their programs from their local constituencies. Occupational programs have quite successfully organized interested members of the community as program advisors, student placement and recruiting agents, and program supporters. Humanities advocates should take similar action.
- Since few occupational program heads are willing to impose humanities requirements on their students, portions of the humanities should be inserted into the technical courses. For example, the nursing faculty might welcome a three week unit on "The Uses of Grieving" taught by an anthropologist in lieu of a semester course in cultural anthropology. Work-load formulas must and can be worked out by college administrators to facilitate short segment courses of this nature.
- District and college policies should allow released time for instructors to organize exhibitions, colloquia, seminars, and other extracurricular activities in the humanities. Extramural funding agencies can help by sponsoring workshops to teach the faculty how to integrate course work with outside presentations.

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- New funding formulas should be explored which would give equal credit for community services and student activity academic pursuits. The faculty should at least be able to draw upon the student activities budget to prepare and publicize their events.
- The contribution of minority cultures to the study of the humanities needs to be emphasized. Unfortunately, few minority-group members teach the humanities so administrators must stress to the faculty the importance of selecting minority-group applicants when positions come open.
- Relationships with the secondary schools must be strengthened. A continuing series of meetings between humanities instructors at the two-year college and the district secondary schools should be arranged for articulation of curriculum and instruction.
- Colleges should make additional resources available to encourage faculty to develop their own courses and reproductive media.
- Funds need to be made available for in-service programs for full-time and part-time humanities staff members and the full-time staff members should play a leading role in implementing these programs.
- Disciplinary affiliation needs to be strengthened among two-year faculty. At a minimum, affiliation with other humanities programs in other schools can result in stronger programs that will appeal to that group. Professional journals should be provided for faculty lounges and offices.

Even if all these recommendations were followed to the letter, the two-year colleges would not become centers of study in the humanities. Their mission is broader than that of sponsoring a liberal arts education, and nothing here suggests that this should change. But the humanities have been so maligned in recent years that faculty need to have their faith restored, to feel that someone cares about what they are teaching. Most of the recommendations are addressed to non-faculty groups; however, the faculty can begin helping themselves by beginning to articulate these kinds of recommendations. This action will prove far more fruitful than continuing futile pleas for restoration of humanities course requirements.

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ERIC Clearinghouse for Community Colleges
University of California at Los Angeles

For further information see
Cohen, Arthur M. "Humanizing the Curriculum," Change, June, 1977.

Karen Watkins, Editor
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HOW NOT TO BE "IT" IN THE GAMES STUDENTS PLAY

What Is the Problem?

Sometimes students and their instructors feel as though they're involved in a cycle that is self-defeating and frustrating. A student appears to need help; the faculty member attempts to respond, but something goes awry. Perhaps the student begins to cling to the instructor and needs more and more of her time. Perhaps the student rejects the help. Perhaps the help seems somehow inappropriate.

Psychologists suggest that what may be happening here--particularly since this is a helping transaction--is a version of a common behavioral cycle. Essentially, the cycle consists of a Persecutor (a person or idea) initiating action against a Victim, with a third party appearing on the scene and attempting to become the Rescuer. In the games described in this Abstract, the student always begins as Victim and the instructor assumes either the Rescuer or Persecutor role or both, depending on the game.

A *game* involves a set of transactions with hidden motives. When the game is first formulated, the initial motive is to avoid pain. Later, the motive is to express that pain. A *life script* is composed of a series of games or a predominant game and is an attempt to structure experiences so that some semblance of inner stability is possible. The trouble is that most scripts are formulated on the basis of unresolved conflicts from earlier experiences, and the conflicts perceived as unresolvable probably are not. They can be responded to without creating a Victim.

Usually games begin with dependent students' demands for recognition. Attention is such a primary human need that when we cannot get a positive response, we seek the negative recognition that games provide. During human transactions the series of complementary roles that form the game can take shape very quickly if there are willing players. Soon a complete life script is in place with each game containing a built-in dead end, a "Catch 22," so that the student becomes dependent on this negative cycle for a sense of identity. An instructor, for instance, who does not recognize the dependent's game (some players are very good) or whose own personal shortcoming makes him vulnerable to the game's complementary role, is likely to find himself a part of the script without realizing it.

Listed below are games often encountered in classroom situations. In each case roles typically played by teacher and student are indicated.

DEPENDENT STUDENT GAMES

Look How Hard I'm Trying, developed in childhood as a response to demands for perfection. The game player is the Victim; if you play, you may be the Rescuer or Persecutor.

Poor Me, a perpetual Victim game for those who concluded early that they are helpless people because someone always did everything for them (e.g., girls are "supposed" to be helpless). You can become a perpetual Rescuer.

Stupid or Kick Me, with the player inviting rejection or abuse and seeking a Persecutor who will give it. This student immediately makes you a Persecutor.

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Wooden Leg, as in "You can't expect a person with a wooden leg (i.e., fat, ugly dumb) to perform well, can you?" The Player/Victim escapes responsibility and yo may be either Rescuer or Persecutor.

GAMES WHERE PLAYERS SWITCH ROLES:

Rapo, where the player initiates a relationship and, if you play, your honest concer is met with unexpected rejection. In a single meeting you quickly move from Rescue to apparent Persecutor. Unfortunately, you've really become the Victim.

Now I've Got You, with the Victim suddenly becoming a Persecutor. You are invited to be Rescuer (your first cue that there's a game going on). As the relationship progresses, your help makes too many demands and suddenly you turn into a Persecutor

Uproar, a series of power plays escalating into noisy confrontation. The Victim baits you, the potential Rescuer, with increasingly inflammatory remarks until you both become Persecutors--partners in a shouting match.

What Can You Do?

As a general principal, you can confront a student's game if you believe he or she is ready to face it. If not, you can choose not to reinforce the game. Here are some rules that should help instructors avoid the Persecutor or Rescuer roles:

Do	Don't
Confront the game head-on when you can.	Believe you are better than the "Victim"
Form a contract when you begin a helping relationship.	Accept the students low self-image.
Support only positive personality traits.	Get angry and frustrated.
Then offer friendship and assistance.	Overreact.
	Displace anger with subtle punitive action

To be most helpful--instructors need to get beyond games, as Berne says, to a point where students not only have a clearer view of their assets and liabilities, but where they can engage in game-free exploration of possibilities. This is where real learning begins.

Beverly Moore
Organization for Human Resource Development

For further information contact the author at OHRD, 1208 Somerset Avenue, Austin Texas, 78753.

Karen Watkins, Editor
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Vol. III, no. 3

SOME IRREDUCIBLE FACTS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

Why are we ignoring crucial facts that could radically alter the nature of instruction?

"I must test every hypothesis against the irreducible facts of nature," stated Issac Newton in his *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, published by the Royal Society of London in July 1687. It is 1980 and educational philosophy has been with us at least since Socrates. Where are our stubborn, irreducible facts, and how are we applying them? Physics and chemistry have their handbooks. Pharmacy has the *Merck Manual*. Doctors have textbooks with endless diagnoses and prescriptions. But where, in all of education and psychology, is our irreducible minimum of crucial facts?

I am not suggesting that, like Linnaeus, we collect and collect and collect facts, data, specimens. I am suggesting that there are crucial facts that we need to have at our fingertips. I am suggesting a handbook in the field of education, and I would like to suggest what it should contain. I will not vouch for the absolute validity of the contents, because I do not believe sufficient verification and replication have been done. Nevertheless, I hope my suggestions will at least help us think more clearly about some of our educational problems.

My nomination for the most important of our facts is the differences in learning rate described by John Carroll in 1963. Carroll demonstrated learning-rate differences between students as varying by a factor of four. His work clearly indicates that instructional procedures that treat students as equal are bound to be ineffective for either the upper or lower ranges or both.

Another topic for this handbook of irreducible facts should be the span of student ability. William Clark Trow described the third-grade elementary school class as including some students who operate on the first-grade level and some students who operate on the sixth-grade level. This is a six-grade spread. Both span of achievement and learning-rate differences are said to increase as students grow older. Christopher Jencks and his associates found learning-rate differences as great as a factor of 14 times among high school students.

The immediate implication is that a third-grade teacher would do better to have a graded series of readers, preferably unmarked. Otherwise we shall continue teaching ineffectively. As Allen Muskopf has pointed out, referring to the teaching of English, "At least three million young people in America today are being given literature textbooks they cannot read." The long-range implication is that some form of individualized instruction, such as Benjamin Bloom's mastery learning, should be widely adopted. Instructional methods that ignore individual difference factors of four and achievement spans of six grades or more cannot possibly be efficient methods of education.

Robert Nichols and L. I. Stevens found that when first-graders were stopped and asked, "What is the teacher saying?" 90% were able to reply, but only 80% of second-graders were able to reply appropriately. Forty-three percent of junior high school students knew what the teacher was talking about, but only 22% of high school students responded correctly. To project these stubborn facts to the college and graduate level is too frightening to consider. Perhaps that is why we have not engraved these data in stone.

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PLANNING, SOC 0

Other devastating facts we look at all too seldom are the results of Joseph Trenaman's study of the retention of facts from lectures, as reported by John McLeish. Trenaman found that students retained 40% of what was said when they listened during the first 15 minutes. But those who listened to 30 and 45 minutes of the same presentation were able to retain only half as much of the information delivered during the first 15 minutes. To make matters worse, students who heard the last 15 minutes of the 45 were unable to grasp or retain even the most important facts of the summary. (The lecture in this case was delivered by the popular astronomer Fred Hoyle.) If this lecture retention problem is universal, it is difficult to understand why the lecture system has not been replaced by a more effective teaching method.

One reason might be that the effects of the lecture are masked. Robert Dubin and Thomas Taveggia reviewed several hundred studies comparing lecture with other forms of instruction; acquisition of information was the dependent variable. They did not find much difference. Ernest Hilgard, as quoted in Dubin and Taveggia, suggests a reason why. It is because the text provides an alternate, uncontrolled source for this information. Wilbert McKeachie suggests the text itself is the most likely substitute for lecture and that other forms of instruction such as discussion are clearly superior when other outcomes are measured and considered. This is not to say that the lecture should be abolished, but that it is an overused, highly ineffective system for use with literate students.

Instructors lecture at rates varying from 120 to 160 words per minute. Edward B. Greene has shown that most students are able to take notes at an average rate of about 20 words per minute. Thus taking verbatim notes is impossible. But what have we done to modify these discrepant facts? Should we regularly cue students as to what facts they should record?

Many of the research studies quoted to show that note taking produces no difference, or negative results, in retention of information deal with lectures delivered at rates of from 120 to 150 words per minute. Paul McClendon, who obtained no difference, gave his lectures at from 130 to 155 words per minute. Donald Peters, who produced a "negative" result (i.e., a result indicating interference) delivered his lecture at from 146 to 202 words per minute. Few researchers or teachers expect students to take verbatim notes, but this limitation was not considered in the studies I have quoted.

Here is one of those irreducible facts for accountability advocates: A child is in school for only 900 hours in one year, about 10% of his total time, according to Robert Travers. Should we be surprised, then, that the teacher accounts at best for about 10% of the variance in children's achievement? Do any of the advocates of accountability seriously maintain that learning only occurs in school?

These are some of the stubborn, irreducible facts for teaching and learning that I would include in a handbook. Actually, they may not be *irrefutable* facts. If not, they should either be refuted emphatically or, if verified, incorporated into our theory and practice. To ignore facts implies that we don't recognize their bearing on our work. All data are not created equal. Part of our responsibility is to assess the importance of the data we have verified. Then we must give it the stature it deserves in both our theory and our practice.

Harold S. Ladas

For further information and full citations of all research mentioned see

Ladas, Harold S. "A Handbook of Irreducible Facts for Teaching and Learning" Phi Delta Kappan (May, 1980).

Karen Watkins, Editor
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Vol. III, no. 4

THE WHEELCHAIR ASSIGNMENT

Suddenly I'm in a wheelchair. It doesn't fit. I always thought it would be fun to have a wheelchair. Disabled students on campus roll to class and don't have to walk. All of a sudden I realize that it isn't fun.

All I want to do is go across the street and buy a pencil at the school store. That shouldn't be so hard. First I've got to get out of this building and into that one. O.K., roll down the hall. The wheelchair isn't balanced properly. I'm pushing equally on both wheels, but I keep going to the right and running into the wall. It never occurred to me that the equipment would be a problem. At least it is something that can be repaired. Unfortunately, future repairs will not help me today.

I can't ride the escalator. Let's see, where is the elevator. Ah, yes, it's at the other end of the hall. I've been going the wrong way. Turn around. Go back. I finally make it to the elevator. Now to navigate into that little, little hole. Elevator doors never looked so small before. Do I go in frontwards and roll out backwards? Or do I go in backwards and come out frontwards at the first floor? There definitely won't be enough room for me to turn around inside the elevator if anyone is in there when those doors open. Let's try frontwards. It works.

People sure do look at you strangely when you're in a wheelchair. I've learned a little bit more about how off-balance this wheelchair is. If I wheel an extra half turn with the right wheel, then move the left a quarter turn I end up in a straight line. That is one problem temporarily worked out, at least until I can get to a repair shop.

First floor, I made it. Ah-h-h-h. Now roll to the door. I can't reach the door with my hands and my footrest won't allow me to get any closer. The doors are 10 feet tall and they must weigh 20 pounds. How in the world do they expect me to open them? I'll bet even students who are walking hate these doors. Oh, thank goodness he came along and held the door for me. Otherwise I don't know if I would have ever gotten through it. I need to learn that particular trick.

I'm really lucky now. There is a ramp that goes to the street, and it's downhill all the way. It must be at least thirty feet long. That should be easy enough, except that the imbalance in the wheels keeps pushing me into the brick wall railing. I'm rolling too fast. How do I stop this thing? Will someone help? Should I ask? When I grab the wheel, it burns my hands. At least it slows me down. If I can just keep headed straight ahead, I believe I'll make it.

Now to cross the street. There is no way to get off the curb except at the other end of the block. Let's see, if I get off the sidewalk here, can I get back up on it on the other side of the street? No! There's the curb ramp over there and it's halfway down the street. That means I have to roll one half block in the traffic before I can get on that sidewalk. What idiots designed the location of these ramps? Whoever it was, they obviously have never been in a wheelchair. Thank goodness traffic isn't heavy, or I would never make it.

Now to get into the bookstore. Here's my regular entrance--six steps up. Let's try the side door--four steps down. Maybe the delivery entrance; ah--no steps so far. If I move a few garbage cans, open another heavy door, all I have to do is find the elevator. Somehow it is always at the other end of the hall.

There is the entrance. I forgot—a revolving gate. My wheelchair won't go through there. All I want to do is buy a pencil. Does this mean I have to ask someone to go in and buy it for me? I don't like feeling so dependent.

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EFFECTIVENESS SOC 0

"Excuse me, would you please buy me a regular pencil with an eraser? I can't through the door."

"Sure. I'll be right back."

I wonder if he realizes how fortunate he is to be able to walk through that ga Who am I to be saying that? Just yesterday I thought it would be "fun" to be able ride in a wheelchair. It sure depends on where you are sitting.

"Thanks very much." Now, back down the hall, back through the garbage ca back across the street. Oh, no, now the ramp is up hill. I can make it. I woulc dare ask anyone for help now.

"Can I give you a push up the ramp?"

"No, thank you. I'll make it." I have made it one fourth of the way, but incline is steep. I wouldn't feel so bad about stopping here to rest a minute if th weren't so many people going past me. Now I'm halfway up and I know that I can m it.

"Would you like me to help you up the ramp?"

"No. Thanks for the offer, but I need to make it on my own." I wonder w people think about when they ask if they can help.

"Would you like for me to give you a push to the top?"

"Would you be willing to push me if you knew that I was not disabled?"

"Sure."

"Then I would love a push. I'm exhausted. That ramp is really steep."

A disabled individual might not have asked that last question. But would he/ have experienced all the feelings described here? Probably so. Fortunately for you see, this was only a sensitivity exercise completed for a class during one day my otherwise able-bodied life. Nothing I have done has made a greater impression such a short time. As educators, it is extremely important that we understand experiences that our disabled students are encountering on a daily basis. Hopefu this understanding will make administrators like me willing to implement the accommo tions necessary to give all students equal access to education.

As a result of this experience, one new leaf I have decided to turn over is make every attempt to understand how I can make my classes more accessible or ben cial for my disabled students. Sometimes we're afraid to ask how we can help. I h a new appreciation for my students' abilities to know what assistance will be of n help. I must simply begin the process by asking. Disabled students, like most of want to be independent and self-sufficient. I am learning that the experiences th students bring to my classes can offer tremendous learning and growth for me--for of us.

Rennie Wolfe
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Vol. III, no. 5

TIME AT ISSUE--RAMBLINGS OF A TEACHER

Since as a teacher I am particularly attentive to--even troubled by--time and its impact on me, I can certainly respond to issues that are raised when time and teaching are discussed. I know, for example, that an eighteen-year-old in this year's freshman class was a year old when John Kennedy was assassinated, that the Beatles had separated by the time she was eight, that during her formative years she became accustomed to hand-held calculators and multisensory happenings called rock concerts. She has shared as many Big Macs with friends as sit-down meals with family, and inflationary times have made "saving money" mean something different to her than to me. In the very same class, there will likely be a fifty-year-old "freshman" who has not been in school for thirty years. He set aside formal learning when I was five. His daughter is almost as old as I. When he began school, children still learned that the atom couldn't be split; in his early teens he listened to radio reports of Hiroshima's devastation. He remembers when farms really were "the heartland of the nation," when divorce was uncommon and when children ate spinach because Popeye said to. The time frames of my two freshmen are so different that it is almost overwhelming to try to think about how best to apply what these students of mine know.

But not just my students' time frames perplex me. My colleagues and I worry together about time as well. Over the years I have heard and made genuine complaints:

"I never have time to read what I want."
"I'm only a week ahead of my class syllabus."
"I'm behind in my grading."
"I don't have time to talk to each student individually."
"The times my students are free, I'm not."
"I don't have time to teach."
"I can't possibly teach at 7:30 in the morning (or 8:00 at night)."

I laugh to think of the times I have sat with colleagues while one of us laboriously explained to the others about an elaborate schedule devised to grade all the term papers before the holidays began or a plan to hold ten minute "interviews" with all one hundred freshmen, or a scheme to finally write that journal article this term.

In still more personal ways, I respond to time as it is institutionally apportioned in those familiar increments called semesters. I know, for example, that for me the spring term rarely moves along as well as the fall, that beginning a semester in January often does not have the same energizing effect on either the students or me as beginning a September term. I know that my students and I are both discombobulated during December--our minds on other things--and that February is typically "a dark passage" in my journey through the teaching year. I can feel my classes take a collective sigh each Monday, try to focus unfocused minds, roll up sleeves and settle into the work week, and on Friday I feel them fidget (I too am edgy). I know that late afternoon classes seem deadly, and I sense that the bright warm days of summer terms might be a good time to teach, if we were not always in such a rush.

Learning theorists typically suggest that creative learning begins when something or someone encourages the learner to pay attention. They speak of activities that break the usual classroom rhythms and that affect the pace of learning. Such breaks in the routine are considerable undertakings demanding flexibility and spontaneity of teachers who normally must pay rigorous attention to the external time constraints imposed by the academic calendar. Certainly I cannot avoid a certain amount of regimentation and routine, but I can *orchestrate* to a greater extent by learning how to value the times which bring renewal.

This is how I have learned to orchestrate my time as a teaching professional. I've decided that using time well is like keeping muscles in tone. I cannot be idle at work during a day, week, or semester without it affecting the ease with which I use the next increment of time allotted me. I'm at my best and enjoy teaching most when I'm in good time condition. On the other hand, that doesn't mean I should try to fill every moment because then I become compulsive in a way that is destructive to the time-valuing process. Rather a constructive kind of synergy takes place when I build space into my schedule for three kinds of teaching preparation--time for reading and design, time for professional dialogue with colleagues, and time for exchange with students. I need some space for all three each week or I quickly lose my perspective. I begin by setting aside quiet time for study and design. In these moments not only does my energy level grow but there seems to be more time to do what must be done. The days feel more productive. Then I cultivate the other two components--exchange with students and colleagues--so that I don't become too narrowly focused and tend to talk to myself in class. These three elements are frequently used by teachers and seem to offer a way to build synergy in teaching.

These are more specific ways I encourage the times of renewal:

- I give my students and me as many new starts as possible. The beginnings of semesters, weeks, class periods, units and projects give us the chance to start again. These beginnings offset the trauma of final exams, the loss felt when students drop by the way, the finality of closing books, projects, terms.
- I review a great deal. To me review relieves an unconscious uneasiness both students and I feel about the passing of time. Looking back offers us security.
- I have learned that grading takes time and does not nourish me. It is work pure and simple. But happily I have much more energy for the work of grading if I give myself time for study and dialogue.
- I have come to admit the legitimacy of planning a semester so that I take into account the time rhythms that affect my teaching. I plan for lively content during February. I try not to schedule especially difficult content during December. I think I intuitively select different kinds of activities for Monday and Friday classes. If I am teaching a 4:30 Monday, Wednesday, Friday section, I may change my whole teaching approach since my typical strategies often don't work then.
- When I am especially tired and the day is dragging, I go to the classroom early and stay late. Often I take something with me--a photograph, a recording, a trivia item--to help facilitate the give and take. Students then have an excuse to talk to me. Often they congregate at my desk and their conversation revives me.
- Although I may have more leeway than some of my colleagues in other subject areas, I have freed myself from the tyranny of "getting it all in." I have a syllabus, I have lesson plans, but I start more slowly than I once did. I am more willing to ponder a legitimate question with my students or invite speculation from them. Somehow, we seem to cover the same amount of material.

Working well in and with time is not easy. In a favorite novel of mine, Eudora Welty's Losing Battles, the generous-hearted hero says to his young impatient wife, "There's room for everything, and time for everybody, if you take your day the way it comes along and try not to be much later than you can help." As a teacher, I have not always found that this formula works, but I have more time for teaching than I thought ten years ago, and on those days when synergy occurs and time does seem to slow down, these words ring true.

Nancy Armes
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Karen Watkins, Editor
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Innovation Abstracts

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FACING A SLOUGH OF DESPOND

Higher education faces a slough of despond for the next 20 years. After that will come a renaissance. My fervent hope is that we can prosper even during a time when higher education generally will decline. I hope that those educational organizations which prosper do so because their educational mission is right. The final report of Clark Kerr's Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education, *Three Thousand Futures*, suggests that the best-off institutions will be leading research universities, highly selective liberal arts colleges, and community colleges. The worst-off institutions will be second line universities, state colleges, and less selective liberal arts colleges.

Declining Enrollments. That report makes several points about the impending enrollment decline. The Carnegie Council anticipates a drop over the next two decades of from 5%-15%. Their figures assume a 23.3% drop in 18 to 24 year olds but an increase in the numbers of older adults--including Blacks, Hispanics, and women. The drop will be uneven. The first slide, from the fall of 1983 through 1988, will account for 40% of the overall decline. There will be a plateau the next year followed by the second slide from the fall of 1991 to 1997 of about 60% of the total. Then there will then be another plateau until the year 2000 when enrollments may start going up again.

Competition for Students. The admissions ratrace, currently well under way, results from the problem of declining enrollments. New markets are being sought, including the adult market, with private colleges, community colleges, and state colleges all vying for the same students. I do not think that the adult market is going to save large numbers of institutions. There are at least three major problems: over-building adult programs, assuming that traditional programs will suffice for adults, and diminishing the increasing gap between those with education and those without it. The greatest failure of adult education is that it has widened this gap. As many as 60 million adult Americans are functionally illiterate. *There lies the real challenge.*

Financial Jeopardy. Enrollment decline means loss of money. In addition, inflation, energy costs, and higher real costs have come about through an aging faculty. In 1911 Carnegie grants equaled about 6% of the entire budget of American higher education. Today that figure is about .0006%. Foundations are not going to bail out higher education, and neither are corporations, though their contributions are increasing at a faster rate. If the Reagan administration intends to cut back on social programs, higher education should work harder toward tax incentives to promote an increase in private philanthropy.

Faculty Problems. For the next 20 years there will be a little faculty turnover. As a result, new and imaginative schemes must be worked out to open up new positions for women and minority faculty members. At the same time the pressures for faculty unionization to preserve the status quo are likely to grow. Increasing rigidities will come about just at the time when more flexibility is needed. In turn, unionization may mean that decision-making will inch upward from departments to the presidents' offices to statewide governing bodies and eventually to the governor's office and the state legislature. Faculty development will also loom larger among the priorities of higher education especially as faculty members change fields or implement innovations.

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Debate Over Curriculum. Over half the students in the United States are enrolled in programs that are essentially vocational in nature, yet there is a resurgent interest in general education. Without growth it will be difficult to introduce new fields of study and new ways of learning. New programs will not be introduced except as replacements unless it can clearly be shown that they will attract additional students and additional funds. Since the cheapest form of instruction is a large lecture class, the case will have to be made financially as well as educationally for different approaches.

Innovation and Change. Innovative and qualitative changes must assure better productivity if they are going to be accepted. For example, each of the past three decades has been heralded as the decade of technology in education, and each time efforts to introduce technology have fizzled. Now there are new factors at work such as dramatic breakthroughs in technology e.g.--satellite broadcast, cable, pay TV, video cassette, video discs, and video text. But the essential issue is whether technology is seen as simply an add-on to traditional programs or as a replacement. It has failed in the past particularly because it has been a costly add-on. As difficult as it may be, *the Carnegie Council strongly recommends that every institution set aside annually 2% of its budget for innovation and change.* Without it, institutional vitality may deteriorate.

Stronger Leadership. There is a dearth of leadership among institutional presidents, and this situation will grow worse unless boards of trustees exert more responsibility and back up institutional leaders. The entire system seems to militate against leadership. Veto groups at the time of selection are likely to prevent the appointment of strong presidents and, once appointed, presidents again are faced with constituencies that too often prevent leadership from emerging. Presidential leadership may well be the single most important factor affecting institutional prosperity.

School-College Relations. The Carnegie Council has said that one-third of our youth are ill-educated, ill-employed, and ill-equipped to make their way in society. Declining high school test scores and the need for remedial work for large numbers of students provide some of the evidence. Schools and colleges must work together toward improvement. The United States faces the gravest educational crisis in its history. We will have fewer workers to support the population dependent on them. We cannot afford any educational casualties for the next 20 years, especially among women and minorities, if we are to improve the sagging productivity of our economy.

Demands for Accountability. As funds grow scarce, demands for their accountability grow. Pressures will be upon institutions to lower standards in order to increase enrollments. Slick admissions huckstering, athletic scandles, grade inflation, cheating, questionable moonlighting activities by faculty members--these things loom larger at a time when resources are tight. There are two primary issues: who evaluates quality and what are the criteria? Traditional voluntary accreditation through the regional accrediting associations is under sharp attack as inadequate.

Essentially, the life and death of institutions is at stake--a kind of educational triage. The issue is whether individual institutions will have the freedom to plan their own futures or have those futures planned for them by outside, central agencies. As a solution, I suggest the use of voluntary consortia of institutions working together on their own problems. It's possible that institutions can be saved through a willingness to share.

E. Alden Dunham
Higher Education Program Officer
Carnegie Corporation

For further information see

Dunham, E. Alden. "CAEL: The 80's and Beyond." A paper presented to the Council for the Advancement of Experiental Learning National Assembly Nov. 12, 1980.

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LOOKING FOR GOOD TEACHING: A GUIDE TO PEER OBSERVATION

Some of our most valuable potential resources for helping us to improve our own teaching are colleagues who share goals and experiences similar to our own. Yet comments upon our teaching made by our peers may tend to focus on our mistakes and to consist of generalities that do not deal with behavior we can do anything about, so that rather than providing the guidance we had hoped for, these comments may leave us feeling threatened, helpless, and discouraged.

This observation guide is intended to assist an observer in watching for certain kinds of behavior in order to help the teacher to build on strengths. It provides information for teachers which is *specific* so that they receive concrete information, *selective* so that they get some guidance as to appropriate directions for change, and *positive* so that they feel encouraged. The observer records actual examples to enable teachers to use their own best practices as the standards to work toward. The information that comes from the checklist is intended only for the information and use of each teacher.

The 200 items on the complete checklist were drawn from 70 books and articles about good teaching, and each represents a description of recommended classroom practice. Because there are many kinds of good teaching, there are a wide variety of behaviors listed, including some which are contradictory. The choice depends on what the teacher is trying to do. The items themselves may become a source of ideas for the teacher, suggesting new or alternative teaching practices.

Below are selected sample items dealing with lecture and discussion formats. There is also an additional set of items relating to the use of questions in the classroom.

TEACHING THROUGH PRESENTATION

Mechanics

__ Moves about room
__ Varies activities over class period
__ Uses illustrative materials or teaching aids
__ Is sensitive to response of class
__ Paces delivery to students' capacity to follow
__ Notices questioners and volunteers

Scholarship

__ Indicates sources of knowledge
__ Shows relation of theory to practice
__ Presents facts or concepts from related fields or relates content to other knowledge areas
__ Refers to recent developments in the field

TEACHING THROUGH INVOLVEMENT

Preparation and conclusion

__ Has provided for input--reading, TV or film viewing, observation, etc.--prior to discussion
__ States objectives
__ Lets students know what will be expected of them in terms of participation
__ Involves students in deciding what issues to discuss
__ Draws together contributions of various members of the group
__ Summarizes and draws new conceptualizations at end

Involving students

__ Uses questions to stimulate discussion
__ Prevents or terminates discussion monopolies

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Organization

Opening

__ Focuses student attention (by demonstration, activity, question, etc.) before launching into lecture
__ States goals or objectives for class session

Structure

__ Presents material in several short blocks
__ Summarizes periodically
__ Refers back to points made or terms used earlier

Closing

__ Summarizes major points or sees that class does so
__ Makes an assignment or suggests an activity which builds on day's topics, something to do or think about

Classroom relationships

__ Appears interested and enthusiastic
__ Relates lesson's goals and content to social context, course or personal goals
__ Prompts awareness of students' relevant knowledge or experience (gives or asks for examples, refers to prior learning, etc.)
__ Uses humor
__ Admits unknown or wrong information
__ Gives reasons for teaching approaches used
__ Accepts student ideas and comments (by reflecting, clarifying, summarizing, encouraging, or praising)
__ Provides opportunities for and encourages audience participation and questions
__ Calls for questions in a way that does not embarrass or belittle the questioner
__ Allows *time* for formulation of questions
__ Checks to see if an answer is understood
__ Helps student answer his/her own question
__ Recognizes potential contributor and makes an opening for that person
__ Assists a quiet student in "saying what he/she means"

Quality of Interaction

__ Listens
__ Reminds students to listen to one another
__ When discussion is not going well, stops to deal directly with group processes
__ Helps student to accept correction or appropriate criticism
__ Encourages students to acknowledge comments of others by summarizing them
__ Allows time for evaluation of the discussion itself
__ When necessary to intervene, does so briefly

Quality and Content of Discussion

__ Introduces relevant considerations that have been missed
__ Questions misconceptions, faulty logic, unwarranted conclusions
__ Distinguishes a value from a fact
__ Requires student to defend a position, relate it to other ideas, or modify it
__ Points out areas of confusion
__ Intervenes when discussion gets off the track
__ Uses questions to guide discussion
__ Summarizes discussion periodically
__ Encourages expression of differences of opinion
__ Supports the rights of speakers who hold minority or unpopular views
__ Refrains from introducing own opinions which bias discussion
__ Presents opinions to enhance seriousness of discussion

Barbara Helling
Coordinator, Teaching/Learning Center

A complete copy of the checklist may be obtained from Dr. Barbara B. Helling, Teaching/ Learning Center, St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN 55057. Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Karen Watkins, Editor
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STUDENTS SPEAK OUT ON EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION

Editor's Note: Frequently faculty wonder what students--especially students from a different culture--really think about their teaching. Few surveys span the range of questions reflected in this excerpt from a questionnaire used by Ms. Jeanne Smith, Oglala-Sioux Community College. Oglala-Sioux Community College is located in the heart of the Pine Ridge reservation--site of Wounded Knee, South Dakota. We think the penetrating responses of her students will intrigue you. Although her setting is unique, her students capture some universal characteristics of good teaching.

1. If you could give advice to English teachers about how English should be taught, what would it be?

° Teachers should do something to make the students feel at ease. They should make English interesting to the student and not like a "drilling" long test. It should be fun.

° Have students work at their own speed, because some students don't catch on that fast and the next thing you know they've dropped the class. They start putting themselves down, saying they're dumb, the work is too hard, or make up an excuse not to attend.

° Explain the lesson in detail. Ask to help students that do not understand.

° Give small, short talks and allow students to talk once in awhile. It is boring when a person talks for 3 or 4 hours straight. Also, humor helps.

° Teachers should be patient. Every person has his own way of writing and it takes a while to learn the techniques that are being taught

2. Teachers often ask each other how they get students to discuss in class. Think back through your experiences. When have you been comfortable to speak?

° I remember in high school my Sioux culture teacher, a moderately fat guy, always talked and laughed. I got to know him very well, maybe because he was different; he joked around. Before he started class he'd joke some and I think everyone got to know him and everyone spoke up in class. I don't know if he was Indian or not.

° I think when the teacher kind of leads the students into the discussion. Go right to the edge, but don't say the answer. Someone will.

° In small groups, I'm not afraid to speak.

° Only if the answer is right so I will not be laughed at.

° After a few sessions when you feel each student out and know what type of a reaction you will get if you do speak. I think if most students giggle or make fun of students, it tends to make everyone uncomfortable.

° If the teacher is comfortable and friendly. Or if they act interested in anything the students have to say and include everyone in discussions.

3. As an Indian student have you found any white teachers to be insensitive to your values? To your way of life? In what ways?

° Yes, I have found teachers to be very insensitive. Our culture is different in a way that is probably very hard for them to understand. Our home life and lifestyle is different. Some of us have so many more problems, they don't understand.

° Not in school, because the student-teacher relationship has to be respected. If the teacher was, I would have told the teacher.

° No, I like white teachers, probably because that's all I have ever had in my life. I think any teacher is to teach you to learn something. I don't think they're here to criticize Indians. It's up to us to learn.

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STUDENT SKILLS, SOC 0

° Yes. When only our words are different, writing comes from thinking in a white perspective.

4. Some teachers have trouble with students attending their classes. Others have excellent attendance. Think back over classes you have been in. Why, in some cases have students come regularly and never missed a class?

° Some of the classes were boring, no fun, the same thing every day.

° I think if the teachers wouldn't just talk and have the students just read they would get better attendance. Seems like the lively classes get good attendance.

° I feel like if they are interested in the class and it benefits them in getting their degree they will come. Others just need the grade.

° I would have excellent attendance if my children were always in good health. Sometimes it is just too frustrating to have to go home, cook, etc. After all that, you're lucky to be able to go to class. I think another factor is where the students lives and how far they have to travel to attend class, transportation, etc.

° I think just as long as they get their assignments in and learn something from the class it should be alright as long as skipping class doesn't get extremely out of hand.

° One teacher tries to use her life as an example and often gets off the track so we lose interest in what she has to say. Some teachers have bad attendance.

° Environment lighten, education made easy, not something to sweat over.

° Students that go to class regularly want to learn or to get excellent grades. Students that don't go to class don't want to learn, or just get tired of work.

° Petty excuses shouldn't bother you but death and family tragedies should be considered more perhaps through private sessions, etc. Families are tight here! Show you care and want to teach. Your kindness will be returned.

5. When whites first come to the reservation what should they be told about their students and the Lakota culture?

° Don't be scared; you can always spot fear. Don't be a pushover yet don't be a crusader who wants to civilize, save, etc.

° Don't try to force a whole new set of rules or regulations on the students. Be reserved and let things flow.

° Many white people are nosy. They try to find out things that are none of their business such as our Indian Religion. That is what I resent the most, when they try to take something apart, piece by piece and then write about them so that eventually it is no longer sacred to us.

° To tread lightly when dealing with culture. A wrong step and the instructor may lose that particular student for good. It hurts some people, to have what they believe in laughed at or some snide remark made.

° The Lakota are quiet people, usually not pushy. It takes them awhile to open up but if they feel like you're their friend, then the barrier is crossed.

° Get to know the students' first names, respect the culture, and get to know the students' faces. Be on a relationship of teacher-student, therefore the student would respect the teacher a lot more.

° They should really try to learn their ways and culture. If they want to work with them, they should have an interest in them.

6. What should these teachers not be told? What should they learn on their own?

° I think teachers should be told everything.

° To treat students as they'd want to be treated if they were new students entering an entirely new culture or city.

° Let them learn for themselves that all Lakota are different.

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IMPROVING PERSONAL POWER AND OPPORTUNITY IN ACADEMIA

The Moving and the Stuck. People in the academic workplace can be roughly grouped into two major categories: the *moving* and the *stuck*. The *moving* include those very few superstars with multiple job prospects and long career growth ahead. The *stuck* are in jobs which have a low ceiling for advancement or do not permit crossover into another area. Faculty, for example, may reach their final appointment level at a fairly young age and anticipate staying there for decades. Salary curves, too, are flat. And finally, most academic institutions have few developmental activities for faculty and staff, a fact which reinforces any sense of an early dead end. People may get *stuck* by reaching jobs that usually have opportunity, but by getting there via nontraditional backgrounds or the wrong ladder. Other people in their jobs would be eligible for higher positions, but the *stuck* lack some critical background factor, impossible to go back and attain, rendering them ineligible for movement. People also get stuck through the "pyramid squeeze"--not enough challenging leadership positions to go around.

Lack of opportunity--*stuckness*--has an impact on behavior and attitudes. Opportunity impacts aspirations first. People develop ambitions in light of the realistic possibility of having them realized. It is only the *moving* who can *afford* to set high goals, so the *stuck* tend to lower their aspirations. For faculty, tragically, this could result in such behaviors as loss of enthusiasm and poor role-modeling for students. Opportunity also affects self-esteem. The *moving* tend to develop more self-confidence, more willingness to take risks. The *stuck*, on the other hand, tend to lower their self-esteem, to see and use fewer skills, to become cautious and conservative, unwilling to take risks. A third impact opportunity has is on people's sense of connection to work. The *moving* become strongly work-engaged. *Stuckness* breeds the feeling that hard work is not necessarily going to accomplish anything, so the *stuck* often disengage, causing high turnover in some administrative jobs, or the need for psychological escape. Many people who become imaginary drop-outs symbolically retire on the job while holding down a safe position, or they seek growth outside the institution through professional association meetings or consulting. A fourth consequence of *stuckness* involves relationships. Whereas the *moving* are likely to keep their political alliances alive and remain concerned about larger issues in their organization, the *stuck* tend to fall back on protective peer groups or outside sources of esteem. Finally, *stuckness* also tends to affect how people handle their grievances or dissatisfactions. The *moving* are likely to engage in active, constructive forms of protest; the *stuck* may instead turn into the petty gripers from the side-lines, the subtle saboteurs who knock down everybody else's constructive ideas but do not have any ideas themselves.

Power. The second basic set of issues concerns power: the capacity to act, to get things done. The essence of organizational power lies in having open lines to resources, information, and support. Power is often structured informally as well as formally, corresponding not to job title or level but to network position and relevance to important issues. In times of decline a sense of powerlessness begins to pervade the whole institution because supplies and support are less available; and people lack sufficient control over their environments to get the resources to generate action.

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Three aspects of jobs help people accumulate institutional power. The first is *flexibility*--the job permits activities that enable people to exercise discretion, to plan, to innovate. But in times when resources are no longer available to innovate, more people become administrators of the routine. The second aspect of job activities that helps people become powerful is their *visibility*. Contributions that can be measured or identified make it possible to single out *individuals* as responsible for contributing to the life of the institution. But, in larger institutions, many administrators and faculty may not be known to one another. Accomplishments tend to be buried inside a single department. A third criterion for power in the job is *relevance*--the activities must be relevant to solving pressing problems of the institution.

The political side of power is also important. One source of such power is sponsors who give power by giving advice, information, encouragement, or reflected status. They serve to deflect criticism; they run interference, handling people trying to block one's creative ideas. They may provide a chance, hiring one for anticipated rather than demonstrated skills, providing him/her endorsement and inside information about the institution. Sponsors are especially important when job evaluations tend to be subjective. Unfortunately, the very informality of sponsorship makes it accessible only to some people. Most organizations do not have routine ways for junior people to come into contact with more senior sponsors.

Power, like opportunity, is important for behavior and attitudes. The powerful usually get more cooperation more easily. The powerless get resistance and complaints. Thus, some of the negative consequences of organizational powerlessness are petty tyranny or domination, the tendency to be too controlling or to reward mediocrity rather than talent. Faculty who feel powerless are likely to turn down a potential superstar for tenure because they feel threatened by the implied comparison. Powerless supervisors tend to hold back their people rather than reward innovation and risk-taking. Powerless administrators also tend to become territorial. They may find a turf, stake it out, and compete with all other territories in the organization--e.g., pulling back from interdisciplinary programs.

Becoming Unstuck. *The challenge is to find ways to enhance opportunity and to empower more people in institutions that are not likely to be growing.* There are numerous ways of achieving job enrichment!

- Clarified career paths, attainable next steps in a career chain
- Developmental activities that deepen the sense of mastery of job-related skills
- Job sharing and job rotation to "expand" the number of possible opportunities
- Lateral transfers and other ways to build bridges between departments
- More frequent and explicit use of temporary assignments, outside service, etc.
- Involvement of more layers of the institution in goal-setting and planning
- Systems for internal proposals on relevant, pressing problem areas on which teams of faculty and staff can work
- More explicit recognition and publication of the work of administrators
- Attention to building relationships among more senior and more junior personnel
- Formal reward and recognition for those who are good people managers.

Academic organizations can create more opportunity and power so that they can unglue the *stuck* and empower the powerless. They should do so in the hope that even in times of economic uncertainty, colleges and universities can be exciting places to work, places that are vital and alive because their people are also vital and alive.

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For further information

Kanter, Rosabeth Moss. "Quality of Work Life and Work Behavior in Academia," National Forum, Fall, 1980.

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BRINGING THEM BACK--BY PHONE

We first called them "the vanishing students." They were the students who enrolled in our classes, attended for a few times, and then were gone. No notice of intent, no officially completed withdrawal form, no trace. In the 1977-78 academic year, 60% of the full-time students who enrolled for the fall quarter had left our college by the end of the spring quarter. We estimated, conservatively, that about three-quarters of these were "vanishing students." Our concern was real--pragmatically because that meant each year a few hundred dissatisfied customers returned to a district in which voters must pass an annual tax election for the college, professionally because of the human and intellectual waste represented by those dismal statistics. We were not much comforted in learning that those attrition figures were not unusual for community colleges nationwide.

The faculty and administration of Central Oregon Community College set out to improve its student retention. Among the methods and techniques we tried was one which we called the Follow-up Desk. The principle behind the Follow-up Desk was basic: before a student's absence becomes excessive, (s)he should receive concerned, personal contact from the college. The message to be delivered to the students generally would (a) express concern over their absences, (b) inquire about any barriers which might be keeping them student from returning to class, and (c) emphasize the importance of regular attendance. The tone of the message was to be friendly; however, the emphasis was not to listen to excuses but to get students back to class immediately. If significant barriers to a student's returning to class did indeed exist, the student was to be put in contact with someone at the college who could help with solving personal, financial or transportation problems.

The principle of making personal contact before a student's absences became excessive was not universally accepted at the college. Some instructors were uneasy at the idea of personally calling absent students. Reasons included instructors' thinking they could not communicate effectively by phone, believing that they were too busy to make such phone calls, and feeling that the process was somehow demeaning to them. Several instructors worried that students would regard such phone calls as interfering in their lives, and there existed a widespread feeling that college students are adults responsible for the consequences of their actions and that college instructors should not be truant officers. Whether or not one agrees with these reasons, they were voiced by respected instructors much concerned with excellence in their teaching.

We asked all instructors to accept this approach on at least an experimental basis. Given the many sincere objections however, the question of "Who should make the personal contact?" also became important. We believed the critical element was that the student be called. Whether the instructor made the contact or the person staffing the Follow-up Desk made the contact was not important.

Procedures are simple. Phone numbers are included on the initial class lists. When an instructor determines that a student's absence is excessive, (s)he either calls the student or contacts the Follow-up Desk with the necessary information. If the latter, the Follow-up Desk calls the student. If the student cannot be reached by phone, either the instructor or the Follow-up Desk sends a letter to the student.

Though no phone conversations are identical, a general pattern does exist. The caller identifies (h)himself, notes that the student has missed class enough for the instructor to be concerned about (h)his success in the class, and inquires about what problems would keep the student from returning to class the very next class period. If a student, as often happens, gives a series of reasons for (h)her absence, the caller is empathetic but does not verbally judge the reasons to be good or bad. We want the student back in class immediately and, at the moment, wish to work with (h)her only in whatever problem areas are keeping (h)her from returning immediately. Throughout the conversation, what is said to the student is guided by a single underlying principle: attending class regularly is critically important.

Our 1980-81 retention figures are considerably better than those of a similar study run in 1977-79. Our freshman-year retention rate improved by 62% and our entering-freshman-to-beginning-sophomore rate improved 222%. One set of statistics does not establish much of anything, of course, but the general feeling is that the efforts of faculty and the Follow-up Desk have contributed significantly to this improvement.

We've learned several things.

First, the time that it takes to make the phone calls is not as burdensome as we believed it would be. We've found that the most efficient times to call students are between 7:30 and 8:15 in the mornings and around supper time. We do rouse students from their sleep, but that's not all bad; there seems to be a special emphasis in an instructor's voice heard on the phone that early. Besides, early contact allows for plans to be made for the student to return to class that very day.

Second, we've not found it necessary for faculty to coordinate their calling. Since students who are absent from one class tend to be absent from most of their classes, we initially worried about the effect of a barrage of phone calls. A barrage there may be, but students apparently do not resent it. In such cases, the reinforcement is dramatic.

Third, students with genuine problems which keep them from attending class regularly are put in touch with persons or agencies that can help them solve those problems. Frequently, students do not know that help exists, or if they do, do not know how to make the necessary contact.

Fourth, a large number of students who would otherwise have vanished do return to class.

Fifth, and most important, students appreciate--are even amazed--at the instructor's concern evidenced by the phone call.

The worry that students would resent the interference in their lives was unfounded. Only a couple of times have instructors been told not to interfere in a student's life. Frequently, students have expressed amazement that anyone cared about their success enough to take the trouble to call. Occasionally the thanks are so effusive that they are almost embarrassing. Though few faculty would say that they thoroughly enjoy making the follow-up phone calls, most agree that the experience is not at all unpleasant, due to the students' positive reactions.

The Central Oregon Community College faculty and administration are pleased with our follow-up efforts, not only because our efforts are an important factor in keeping our enrollment from declining, but because they often result in more students receiving the benefits of the education and training we can offer them.

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Innovation Abstracts

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MANAGING UNLEARNING

"Obstinate" students simply have not learned what they were supposed to, when they were supposed to. The most significant student learnings have not been predicted, managed, or measured. At first, this surprised me. I am now convinced I was surprised because I was looking for something else. I believe my expectations were formed by the dominant scientific myth about how people learn, derived for the most part, from research on rats, pigeons and babies.

EXAMINING THE DOMINANT MYTH: The following are a few organizing assumptions, derived from "scientific" learning theory, that may limit our perspective and our programs.

1. Learning is linear and sequential. A pigeon learns to discriminate color by being reinforced on simple discrimination tasks and gradually, by successive approximation, working up to the more complex tasks. If people were pigeons we would design curricula that place students on an assembly line of courses and experiences, expecting them to take one step at a time, accumulating complexity on the way. We certainly would not ask them to experience the same event more than once in different contexts, and we would ignore that "growth and regression just might be intertwined in such a way that one step forward might require several steps backward." (Seashore)

2. Learning is molecular. Our pigeon learned to peck by gradually associating muscular movement with reinforcement. If students were pigeons, we would design educational programs on the assumption that competent graduates of our program had added small bits of knowledge and skill to their knapsack until they were almost full.

3. Learning is an individual affair. The pigeon learns alone in the box. Learning is a rearrangement of neural connections beneath the feathers. If our students were pigeons, we would focus our major attention and energy on the instruction of individuals, ignoring the context of the educational experience. We would ignore the fact that all of our learnings are interactive, that our mind is located somewhere between us and another person or object, that the most fruitful exploration of how people learn is in relationships and the educational context, not in glial cells.

4. Learning is in the hands of the faculty. Our pigeon is controlled by the person pushing the reinforcement button. What students need to know and how they need to learn is assumed to be under our control. It should not surprise us to repeatedly discover that "none is apathetic except in the pursuit of someone else's goals."

5. Learning is rigorous and precise, a demanding discipline. For our pigeon, precision and long work are the keys. But human learning is like breathing, one of the most natural processes given to us. Unlearning is the difficulty.

6. Learning results in predictable, definable, behavioral outcomes. We can precisely chart the number of misses our pigeon makes in a given unit of time. We can also precisely determine, ahead of time, our criterion of performance when we can say the pigeon has learned. If our students were pigeons, we would believe that we measure whether and what students learn, and that we measure what is important, ignoring the "covert" curriculum and other trivia that may have more to do with ultimate success than our preconceived outcomes. Students may learn more about how they are taught than what they are taught.

AN ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVE: The propositions that follow are offered to broaden our perspective of the nature of learning.

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1. Learning is human change. Effective programs enable their students and faculty t develop. If concepts and skills are truly integrated, they result in personal, affective, conceptual and behavioral change. Human change is not easy; it is not merely matter of accumulating new concepts. I know of no studies that emphasize the emotional turmoil a rat went through in learning a new map.

2. Learning is holistic and transformational. Cognitive, affective and behavioral map are like ecological systems. Students arrive in our programs with elaborate map about the nature of reality, themselves, others, their skills. We do not change on part without affecting all the other parts. Reorganization of whole systems is transformational, not incremental change.

3. Learning is circular. We often have to return to what we once "knew" in order t recognize it. In a much larger context, T. S. Eliot said it: "We shall not cease fror exploration and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started an know the place for the first time." ("The Four Quartets")

4. The context of learning is critical. People learn in relationship. The "atmosphere of the classroom, the mode of instruction, the relationships between students and th student's relationships with people outside the program all impact on learning.

5. What is learned is dependent on the learner. We easily lose sight of the truth tha if a student learns anything it is because s/he is open, receptive and ready to learn The role of the educator is therefore to manage an environment within which student will allow more information.

6. Learning is easy. Learning is one of the most natural processes in the world. W do not have to motivate people to learn. Our job as educators is to not be a road block. When students truly learn, they change with a resultant death of the ol system. For some learnings the transition is easy. For others it is painful and difficult. There is a period of "hanging on" to the old and familiar. Grasping, denial anger and bargaining finally lead to acceptance. Kubler-Ross is more relevant her than Skinner.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING: The following are a few of the characteristics c programs that would deal with the issues of human change and unlearning.

1. *Flexibility with realistic, high standards of competence.* Competency education ca provide the necessary freedom for individual learning styles. If we can define rigorous goals for a program, and have clear ways of assessing them, we can grant degree with integrity. The student is then free to learn in any mode and at any time s/he i able and motivated.

2. *Support systems.* Students going through the inevitable difficulties of unlearnin need support from many sources. A program can address this issue by facilitatin student-to-student contact, enabling group building, and by including spouses.

3. *Appreciation for and legitimization of the unlearning process.* Faculty need to b aware of what students go through to change. If they know, they will probably b more likely to have the necessary flexibility and support in their curriculum.

4. *Student Self-Assessment.* Even though students may meet our criteria of performance, they will also encounter significant personal learnings. The self-assessmer process is a way of tracking these serendipitous learnings.

5. *Evaluation of the educational context.* In examining the context of our learnin environment, we need ways of knowing what is going on with the students, and students need ways of being able to influence the faculty and programs. An effectiv environment must balance challenge and confrontation with support.

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For further information
from a paper presented to the American Society for Training and Development, 19

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STRATEGIES FOR WORKING WITH MIDDLE EASTERN STUDENTS

A recent article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* revealed that more foreign students are studying in United States institutions than ever before. Of the top ten colleges in foreign student enrollment, two are community colleges - Los Angeles City College and Miami-Dade Community College. Students choose institutions on the basis of recommendations of friends, admissions policies, and responsive international student programs which help them to quickly become members of the campus and local community.

Yet the presence of so many international students on college campuses has been in some instances a two-edged sword. Students have been welcomed for the cultural awareness they stimulate. Yet, the unfamiliarity of instructors with their backgrounds and their behaviors has sometimes led to confrontations and frustrations.

When faculty members are asked about their problems with teaching international students, the following are cited repeatedly: cheating, inability to meet deadlines, poor writing skills, a lack of seriousness about education, an argumentative nature, and poor classroom participation. These problems are more easily understood and confronted when we begin to understand the varying beliefs held by different cultures. Middle Eastern societies, for example, approach the learning process in significantly different ways.

Middle East educational systems are generally based on memorization of facts, authoritarian roles for teachers, and passive roles for students. This orientation is in sharp contrast to the emphasis on synthesis, application, brevity, and research emphasized in the participatory classroom methodologies of our educational system.

Personally, Middle Eastern students may have a different orientation toward time, a preference for dependence over independence, for group membership versus individuality, and may exhibit a need to save face at any cost to avoid shame. All of these attitudes produce behavior which may not be easily understood by a United States citizen.

Comments by Middle Eastern students best illustrate these values.

Time

"It doesn't make sense to make plans too far in advance because you never know what will happen."

"I was out of breath a whole year just trying to keep up with the industrialized system in the U.S."

Dependence

"I dress and act the way my parents expect me to, but if I know it will not hurt them, I act and dress the way I want."

"If I try to make my own decisions without consulting my parents, they feel that I am acting irresponsibly."

Group Orientation

"Trying to be the smartest in the class would cost me my friends."

"If a friend dropped in unexpectedly, I would stop my work--even if it were very important--to talk with him and offer him refreshment."

Avoiding Shame or Saving Face

"I never talk about my problems or failures with my friends because I don't want them to think I am weak."

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"If I feel that I have been insulted, I must react or I am not a man."

"Honesty is not good when it hurts someone's feelings."

"Learning by doing is too risky and inefficient. We may look foolish. It is better for the teacher to tell us the right way to perform."

Shame and Group Orientation

"I asked him to help me write my research paper because I thought he was my friend."

Two of the more pressing and frequent problems facing instructors working with Middle Eastern students concern cheating and grading practices.

Cheating. In Middle Eastern cultures, a friend and a stable peer group are valued above western-held institutional values. If a friend asks you for the answer to a test question, you give it to your friend because you have the obligation to meet another's needs. As a member of a group of friends, you do little to set yourself apart from the group. Being the smartest in the class could mean the loss of friendships since competition and individual achievement are viewed as destructive behaviors. Here are useful preventative measures:

1. In the first class meeting, explain cheating as explicitly as possible.
2. Using the value placed on group approval as a starting point, explain cheating as an act which takes away from others.
3. Confront a student who is cheating in class as subtly as possible so that the student is not shamed before his peers. Some instructors simply note point deductions on students' papers while walking by their desks during an exam.

Grading. Grades are another area of misunderstanding. The student has probably come from a system which tests annually and uses that one test as a measure of achievement. The student is now part of a system in which frequent exams, averages, and demonstrated progress in understanding concepts are all combined to create a grade. The averaging process is a new experience. Perhaps the following process will promote understanding of American grading practices:

1. Distribute a sheet covering your grading criteria.
2. After a midterm exam or a series of quizzes, walk your students through a practice exercise using a worksheet which lets them fill in their previous grades.
3. Show them how tests, papers, and projects are point valued. Make clear that an "A" and a "C" can average to a final grade of "B."
4. Emphasize that a rational process is used to determine their grades.

If you find yourself in a discussion with a student about a grade or regulation, begin your response with statements of reason. Conclude your response with a firm and final decision. Argumentativeness creates problems because it leaves room for compromise, and the instructor appears less than an authority. Justify your decision with facts and avoid any indication of having made an arbitrary decision.

Middle Eastern students are only one of a number of cultures represented in our classes. But this culture helps us examine how the values behind the attitudes and behaviors of students lead to behavior which is sometimes the opposite of our expectations. Recognizing these underlying motives among international students helps us better manage instruction and promote learning among culturally diverse students.

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USING POSITIVE LANGUAGE FOR LEARNING

Donald W. Felker wrote Building Positive Self-Concepts, published in 1974, to instruct teachers to help build positive self-concepts in their students by modeling certain behaviors. While the book focuses on self-concept development from infancy to adolescence, it contains gems of information that are helpful to the adult developmental educator.

Felker believes that there is a strong positive correlation between self-controlled behavior and self-concept development, *and that language is at the heart of that correlation*. It is language which first draws meaning out of sensory data and gives us the tools with which to abstract, to speak of ideas. The abstracting ability and resulting "inner speech" that develop become a self-referent language and a means by which we can control behavior or, I would suggest, *evaluate reality* (sensory data).

If language is the key, what are some practical ways you as an adult developmental educator can utilize language to help students develop control of their behavior and build positive self-concepts? Since language draws meaning out of sensory data, one of the first things you can do is to assess whether or not your students are sensorily responsive or even sensorily aware. Ask students to describe sensory reactions to some aspect of the learning environment--such as the room. Deal with one sense at a time. Then encourage them to add two, three, four or more reactions to that one sense. As they compare their awarenesses with those of other students, assure them that their perceptions are valuable. As soon as students have become comfortable with their oral reactions to the environment, have them reconstruct their responses in written form. Accept lists, sentences, any effort that ends up on paper--and praise the effort.

USING LANGUAGE TO TEACH SELF-DIRECTED BEHAVIORS

There are other ways you can positively emphasize the relationship between language, self-controlled behavior, and positive self-concept. Four of Felker's Keys to Better Self-Concept, modified and expanded for the adult developmental educator, are offered here as suggestions.

Teachers, praise yourselves. As you give instructions for a task to an individual or a group, talk through what you are doing as you do it, and state positive feelings as they occur to you. For example, if I am modeling effective skimming and scanning study techniques for a student, I might say, "When I can find the answer in twenty seconds, it is satisfying. This was always a hard subject for me."

Help students evaluate realistically. For a time, try evaluating all work verbally rather than by assigning number or letter grades. Point out specific strengths of the work and indicate its relationship to the student's most recent past performance. Require revision as seems necessary, concentrating on what you as a professional believe the student is capable of doing. Create parameters by describing exactly *how* you expect him or her to complete the task. For example you might say, "When you factor these next two equations, *draw arrows to show me how* you're applying the FOIL technique."

Teach students to praise themselves. Felker says that this is the most important aspect of self-concept development, for it removes the need for any external reinforcement. Here, you can really tap the benefits of positive language.

I will never forget the reaction of one student when she asked me to evaluate one of her paragraphs. I began by asking her to tell me what she liked about it, and without looking at her writing, I turned the paper over and wrote "Good Things" on the back. I waited. The student looked startled, bemused, frightened, and then thoughtful. "Well," she began, her voice was low and trembling and she would not look at me, "I guess I can spell okay." I wrote "Spelling" and waited. "I can write neat." Her voice was stronger. I wrote "Neat Writing" and waited again. Now this middle-aged woman looked directly at me and almost smiled. "I like my topic." added that to the list of good things. Then as I read her paragraph, I reinforced her evaluation by using some of her words, by adding some of my own, and by offering some suggestions for simple revision. The language of evaluation originated with the student; she had controlled behavior not only by producing the paragraph but by responding verbally as part of the effort. As a teacher, I had required only that the language of response be positive.

Teach students to praise others. We model this last suggestion when we publicly praise the efforts of our students, thus creating an atmosphere for positive expression. Once students are comfortable with and confident about praising themselves pair those working on the same or similar assignments, asking each to list two or three positive aspects of the other's work. You might get a response such as, "His answer isn't right, but he has the right idea." Here you can offer more positive reinforcement by talking through the importance of understanding the process in writing

Require this pairing, changing partners when appropriate, until students spontaneously offer praise to their colleagues. It *will* occur. Thinking, talking, and acting positively are all normal human activities. It is our job as teachers to use language with our students in ways that encourage them to engage in these activities and to enjoy the resulting development of positive self-concepts.

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For further information

Felker, Donald W. Building Positive Self-Concepts. Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing Company, 1974.

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QUALITY IN UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

Historically when we have talked of quality, we have spoken of excellence--unbridled excellence. Quality is in this sense of the word a single, unwavering standard by which all undergraduate programs can be evaluated. But quality is also a relative phenomenon. More than ever before we recognize diversity--in people, schools, and programs. We do not expect to use the same standard of excellence for judging a community college and a research university. In this respect, quality is a measure of the best a particular institution is capable of achieving. My basic premise is that all undergraduate programs must have a certain universal quality and a certain individual quality. Neither alone is sufficient.

Quality: What Should be Expected of *all* Undergraduate Programs

There is enormous variation in these programs. Yet they typically consist of the same five elements: 1) admissions--a mechanism and criteria for enrolling students; 2) instruction--a faculty and a formal course of studies; 3) support services--activities needed to advance instruction such as compensatory education and advising; 4) evaluation--a method of gauging student progress; and 5) certification--one or more degrees. There are, of course, exceptions to this pattern. Nonetheless it is in these five constituent elements of the program that there must be a common level of quality. And any curriculum that fails to achieve this minimum level of excellence cannot be regarded as a quality program. The following are excerpts of the standards that might be expected of all programs leading to a degree.

Admissions: Each college should have a publicly stated admissions policy and admit only those students with the potential to complete a particular program with the assistance of all available institutional resources (e.g., compensatory education).

Instruction: Programs should be offered only in the areas where adequate resources (e.g., staff, facilities, money) are available. They should be current, complete, coherent, and commensurate with accepted standards of degree study; all courses of study listed in the college catalogue should be open to all students, unless specific restrictions are noted; all classes listed in the college catalogue should be offered periodically; all courses offered should be comparable to their catalogue descriptions.

Support Services: Support services should be comparable in number and nature with the programs the college offers and the characteristics of the students it admits; compensatory services should be available to all students lacking the ability to complete institutional requirements at the time of admission.

Evaluation: The principle of academic honesty should be embraced and enforced; students should be dismissed only for appropriate, clearly stated and specific causes.

Certification: The meaning and significance of an institution's degree should be clearly stated; the standards for earning a degree should be the same for all students, even if the paths to attaining a degree vary from person to person.

Quality: What Should be Expected of *Each* Undergraduate Program

The universals listed above are essential for quality, but they are not sufficient. Quality is a relative phenomenon, rooted in the individual college, which differs from every other school in the country in many ways. The highest quality program any college can adopt is that which conforms best to its own situation.

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Every college should have a set of outcomes that it expects its students to achieve--that is, a vision of what a graduate of the college should look like. The undergraduate program needs to be a reflection of that vision. Consequently, an essential aspect of quality is the degree to which the curriculum is consistent with and achieves the desired outcomes. To accomplish this end, a program must be geared to the abilities and needs of its students. This means, for example, that if two colleges desired precisely the same outcomes of their graduates but enrolled different student bodies, they might require different programs of study. Quality also requires a college's undergraduate curriculum to be consistent with the training and interests of its faculty. A third quality requirement is that the program be consistent with the resources available to the institution. A fourth and final element of curricular excellence is compatibility with the mission and traditions of the college. Too often American colleges and universities concentrate on the *process* of building a curriculum and ignore the *purposes* for building that curriculum. What they lose as a consequence is meaning and quality.

Quality: What It Is Not

I have found over the years that many of the things I believed to be fundamental, even intrinsic, to quality were not. Six stand out. The first is that money is excellence. Howard Bowen reports there is "a rather indistinct but positive relationship between institutional expenditures for education and outcomes in the form of value added." But at the same time he finds that "affluent institutions could perform as well, or nearly as well with less money, or that many institutions could achieve greater results with the same money." In short, money helps, but cash is not quality. A second belief of this type is that quality is sky high admissions standards. But this belief confuses selectivity and excellence. A third opinion is that quality is vested in a particular type of institution. But one is not better than another; they are simply different. A fourth myth is that one course of study is more excellent than another. Traditionally, it was held that the liberal arts were the cream of academic studies. Today vocational subjects are being touted as the only sensible courses while the liberal arts are being dismissed for their impracticality. Yet, neither is of higher quality than the other. Moreover, the separation is absurd. The two work together best in tandem. In any case, saying one course of study is more excellent than another confuses quality and utilitarianism. An additional misconception is that one form of instruction is better than others. Most people believe that small classes are superior to large ones. A number hold that teacher-taught courses rival machine-taught classes. A great deal of research has been done on the subject, and the reality is that small classes and teacher-taught courses are better for *some* students. Sixth and finally, excellence is not the product of a whole host of unintended educational outcomes. Most assessments of the impact of college on students end with a laundry list of ways that the college-educated differ from non-college attenders. Results maintaining that college graduates live longer, make more money, and like their work better are consistently reported. But it is as absurd to evaluate baccalaureate excellence in this manner as it is to evaluate dentists' competence on the basis of the magazines found in their waiting rooms. Quality is not a measure of everything and anything a college does that is beneficial. It can and should be more narrowly defined.

I am proposing that we establish a floor for quality through the universals expected of all institutions while allowing each college or university to create its own ceiling. This system will allow quality to flourish.

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For further information
from a paper presented at the Conference on the "Quality of Baccalaureate Education: Expectations and Measures," February 4-6, 1981, Austin, Texas.

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FEEDBACK AND CALIBRATION: THEIR SIGNIFICANCE IN EDUCATION

We educators tend to be a trendy bunch and borrow from science, engineering, politics, and business those terms which seem to suit our needs. Frequently, however, we distort the original meaning of these terms and get results that the originators wouldn't recognize. Let me remind you of some recent terms such as "systems approach" and "flow charts." Perhaps enough said...?

"Feedback" is a term from sound systems. If the volume of a loudspeaker is too high, the microphone picks it up and develops a loud howl heard throughout the auditorium. When this happens, there is a mad rush to correct the problem--volume turned down, microphone switched off, cords uncoiled, or whatever. So, *feedback is an instant, just-as-it's-happening response to an error condition.*

"Calibration" is an after-the-fact adjustment. You may, for example, receive a set of photos back from the printers and discover that they are too light. On your next roll, you carefully reset (calibrate) your light meter to slightly reduce the exposure. Of course, calibration for the next roll of film doesn't correct the problem of what went wrong with the last roll.

Let's consider an example from ballistics. A rifle has been purchased and is set up on a special bench where it is rigidly attached. A series of rounds are then fired and a study made of the resultant pattern of holes: the pattern can be too high or too much to the left or right. The rifle sights are adjusted and more rounds fired until the sights are calibrated to the limitations of the weapon.

The target shooter then uses the cross hairs to get continuous feedback from the target. When he (or she) is lined up perfectly the weapon is fired, in reasonable confidence and belief that the weapon has been properly calibrated.

Now, how can we introduce these elements into our classes? A few suggestions on feedback:

1. Make more use of open book quizzes. Give the students quizzes that they can answer from handouts, class notes, or texts.

2. In math (or other problem solving) give the students the answers. If possible, also make partial answers available. Here is a math problem. Anyone who attempts it (including you) will immediately know whether the answer derived is right or not:

   i. Write down any three-digit number (such as 467).
   ii. Make it into a six-digit number by repeating the three digits (467,467).
   iii. Divide this number by 7; divide the result by 11; and divide that result by 13. If you did it correctly, you'll KNOW you have the right answer.

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Another important idea is to improve the students' calibration of their efforts by such procedures as:

1. As each student completes a test, provide an immediate copy of the correct answers; or, go over them immediately.
2. If giving an essay exam, provide students with a large number of essay questions to answer and check out ahead of time. The actual test questions you use can even come from these...
3. After students take a test, require them to correct every item with an explanation of why the right answer is right and the wrong one wrong. Too often, when the instructor grades a paper and the student reviews the grade, both are through with the test. Maybe that really ought to be the beginning...

Some further applications of feedback and calibration:

1. No matter what you are saying or doing in class, consider allowing a question about the topic being presented to be ALWAYS in order.
2. Recognize that when a large percentage of the class does very well (or fails) that you, too, may be doing very well (or failing).
3. Set standards for success. (Whenever less than 70% of my students are successful in mastering a concept, I feel obligated to re-teach that idea and re-test the students next time. Yes, all through the term my tests get longer and longer.)

Let's forget the phrase "instant feedback." Feedback _is_ instant; if it's not instant, it's not feedback--maybe it's calibration.

David V. Jenrette
Editor

For further information

See _LIFElines_ published by the Faculty Resources Department, Miami-Dade Community College, North, 11380 N.W. 27 Avenue, Miami, Florida 33167.

Editor's Note: This is the last of our weekly _Innovation Abstracts_. The _Abstracts_ are published once a month during the summer. Weekly publication will resume with the resumption of classes at The University of Texas the third week of September. Have an invigorating summer!

Karen Watkins

Karen Watkins, Editor
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DISABLED STUDENTS: SOUTHEASTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE VS. DAVIS

In recent history, Congress has passed and amended the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to legally insure equal rights for disabled citizens and to encourage equal opportunity for the disabled in education, employment, transportation, housing and other facets of daily living. Section 504 of this act grants disabled persons the rights given members of racial, religious, and nationality minorities by the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In fact, the language of the section referring to disabled students, with its most recent amendments, closely tracks that of the other civil rights legislation.

> *No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States... shall, solely by reason of his or her handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance or under any program or activity conducted by any Executive Agency or by the United States Postal Service.*

Section 504 applies directly to our institutions of higher education, and we need to be aware of its implications. This historic legislation is leading to increased court action on behalf of the disabled. In 1979, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of Southeastern Community College when Frances B. Davis, a hearing impaired student, sued for admission to the college's nursing program. The media interpreted this decision as a great blow to the civil rights of and equal access for disabled people, but in fact the decision is a narrow one, interpreting only specific aspects of Section 504. A closer look at the case will suggest its future impact on admissions policies.

Frances B. Davis, a certified licensed practical nurse, was enrolled in the Parallel program at Southeastern Community College, a public institution receiving federal funds. Ms. Davis, in hopes of attaining the Associate Degree and thereby qualifying for state certification as a registered nurse, applied to the nursing program at Southeastern. During the interview, she acknowledged a history of auditory problems and indicated her dependence on a hearing aid. She was advised to consult an audiologist who recommended a change in hearing aid. The resulting improvement in hearing did not, however, enable her to discriminate sounds sufficiently to understand normal speech. She would have to continue to depend on her lip-reading skill.

Subsequently, Southeastern determined not only that this disability would make it unsafe for her to practice as a nurse, but that it would be impossible for her to participate safely in the normal clinical aspects of training. The college stated that it would be impossible for Ms. Davis to benefit fully from the nursing program. After reconsideration of the decision at Ms. Davis' request, the entire nursing staff of the college voted to deny her admission. At that point, Ms. Davis filed, maintaining her constitutional rights, equal protection, and due process had been denied. After an appeal and decision by a mid-level federal appellate court, the Supreme Court resolved two issues regarding the rights of the disabled through their findings.

The Supreme Court interpreted the phrase in Section 504 which reads "otherwise qualified handicapped individual" to mean a person who meets all of a program's requirements in spite of their disability. Its opinion merely authorizes universities and colleges to use physical qualifications that are *essential* to participation in their programs as admissions criteria. However, the Court made it clear that "mere possession of a handicap is not a permissible ground for assuming an inability to function in a particular context." Basically, the decision indicates that the "other" qualifications as mentioned in Section 504 do include *necessary* physical qualifications which a disabled person might be required to possess. In Davis' case, the Court found hearing to be necessary for the nursing program and indispensable for professional competence.

The Supreme Court also ruled that *no part* of Section 504 mandates that colleges receiving federal monies *must* undertake affirmative action for disabled persons. Institutions do not have to seek out and actively accommodate individuals with disabilities, but they do have to treat those who are qualified in an equal, evenhanded manner.

In this landmark decision, the Court emphasizes legitimate physical qualifications. Institutions are allowed to require only those qualifications related to valid institutional goals or purposes. They must avoid imposing arbitrary physical requirements. At the same time, the Court has not indicated a standard for determining the legitimacy of stated qualifications, and existing standards may be tested in the courts in the future.

Although the decision of the Supreme Court against Davis may seem to be a substantial defeat for other disabled people seeking equal access to education, it must be remembered that Davis had not presented a good factual record of her qualifications to eventually practice nursing and that the decision "...clearly allows other handicapped persons to receive relief in the future." The Court recognizes the possibility that refusal to modify an existing program (by providing appropriate auxiliary aids, for example) might be unreasonable and discriminatory and recognizes that future technological advances in treating disabilities may render past and present requirements and practices discriminatory. Always, the key is the relationship between the disability and the skills necessary to participate in a program. For example, it probably would be impermissible to exclude an academically qualified blind, deaf, or mobility impaired person from admission to law school or to exclude a person in a wheelchair from a medical technology program since minor adjustments in the lab would enable the qualified individual to perform his/her job effectively.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and, in particular, Section 504 mark the end of hundreds of years of legislative indifference to discrimination against the disabled. Although many related issues remain unsettled, the courts have begun to define and narrow the interpretation and application of the legislation and, by and large in the process, remove physical and psychological barriers to the disabled. The combined effort of enforcing agencies, the courts, and most importantly disabled citizens themselves will promote the speedy achievement of goals the Supreme Court has described as independence and self-confidence; the feeling of creativity; lives of high spirits, rather than hushed, suffocating silence.

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CREDITS AND CREDENTIALS

Postsecondary education's system for awarding educational credit and credentials should be modified to more adequately serve present educational and social needs. Modifying the system can help meet two pressing needs: *The need for credits and credentials to communicate their meaning accurately and adequately, and the need to incorporate into the credit and credential system recognition not only for learning attained in different types of postsecondary education institutions and diverse curricula, but also for learning attained in structured and nonstructured settings outside of these institutions.*

The present system, which dates back to around the turn of the century, served education and society quite well so long as institutions were relatively homogeneous in the characteristics of faculties, students, courses, modes of instruction, academic calendars, curricular and institutional structures, and graduation requirements. Today, the types of institutions, curricula, and objectives of students are far more heterogeneous. Access to learning has been vastly improved, and interest in nontraditional education and open learning is growing. There is a sharpened awareness that substantial educational programs of a postsecondary nature are offered by proprietary schools, government agencies, business, industry, the military, unions, voluntary and professional associations, and other social institutions such as hospitals--often with educational outcomes equivalent to those associated with curricula of colleges and universities. Large numbers of students have had learning experiences in two or more educational settings or in two or more curricula. As their personal circumstances and educational objectives change, they often seek to have their learning, wherever and however attained, incorporated into the credit and credentialing system so that they can take advantage of subsequent opportunities without duplicating educational experiences and wasting personal resources.

Recent social changes also carry important implications for policies and practices in credentialing educational accomplishment. Linkages between education and performance in the work setting have become a dominant theme in public discussions on education. As a result, society has come to emphasize credits and credentials somewhat more as measures of a person's capabilities, competencies, and learning, and somewhat less as accolades for educational accomplishment. Among students, there appears to be a growing concern with how the institution's credentials will help them get a job or pursue advanced study. Employers are becoming concerned with the validity of credentials as predictors of performance in the work place.

With recent educational and social changes has come a natural questioning about the significance and uses of educational credit and credentials. Some critics assert that credits measure little more than classroom seat time. Others disparage credits and credentials as major obstacles to the realization of a learning society, arguing that credits and credentials are antithetical to the teaching-learning process. Some contend that credit and credentials should be awarded, not by educational institutions, but rather by other agencies, a change that would separate the teaching and certifying functions. Still others would abolish credit and credentials altogether.

There is much to criticize about credit and credentials, but they do nonetheless convey important information about learning accomplishments that is both educationally and socially useful. Moreover, the credit and credentialing policies and practices

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have not been unresponsive to educational and social change. For example, credit by examination is used extensively, and procedures have been instituted for translating extra-institutional learning into credit recommendations that can be used by institutions. *Yet there remains an urgent need to further modify the credit and credentialing system.* The Task Force on Educational Credit and Credentials has prepared a report to highlight these needed reforms. A number of the recommendations from this report have special significance for community colleges. Some excerpts follow:

RECOMMENDATION THREE. Associate degrees and bachelor's degrees should attest to at least the following three types of accomplishment:

1. Accomplishment specified by the awarding institution as necessary for the development of a broadly educated person;
2. Competence in analytical, communication, quantitative, and synthesizing skills;
3. Accomplishment in a specialized area of study covering a set of integrated learnings requiring analysis, understanding of principles that have judgmental application, and a theoretical knowledge base.

RECOMMENDATION FOUR. Each credential-granting institution should clearly define, to the extent possible, the meaning of the certificates and degrees it awards.

RECOMMENDATION FIVE. Institutions should give careful attention to the use of degree designations, to include consistent use of the terms "arts" and "sciences."

RECOMMENDATION SIX. Each postsecondary education institution should clearly define the meaning of the credit units it awards. Statements of educational accomplishment, as explicit as possible, should be made for each credit unit.

RECOMMENDATION EIGHT. Postsecondary education institutions should develop alternative programs that (1) state requirements in terms of assessable educational accomplishment, and (2) permit students to demonstrate accomplishment without reference to time-bound and campus-bound instruction and learning.

RECOMMENDATION ELEVEN. Postsecondary education institutions should consider the needs of mobile and older adult students, providing them with sufficient information, orientation, and counseling on the requirements for credentials and on the policies for the transfer of credit and for the award of credit for extra-institutional learning.

RECOMMENDATION FOURTEEN. Credit for continuing education courses, where standards, course objectives, and evaluation of educational accomplishment differ from regular credit courses, should be evaluated by methods appropriate for extra-institutional learning. Direct formula conversion of measures such as the continuing education unit (CEU) is not appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION FIFTEEN. Postsecondary education institutions should formulate their roles in recredentialing and in revalidation of educational credentials, requirements now becoming commonplace in licensure and voluntary certification.

CONCLUSION. Since credit and credentials reflect the programs, the requirements, and outcomes of postsecondary education, the recommendations, if successfully implemented, should help institutions communicate more clearly to others. Internally, they will assist in the formulation of more concrete and measurable educational objectives, in the improvement of the design of educational programs, in the evaluation of their effectiveness, and in the wiser use of educational resources.

Task Force on Educational Credit and Credentials

For further information See Recommendations on Credentialing Educational Accomplishment (Washington: American Council on Education, 1978). The excerpts are used by permission. Due to space limitations, the accompanying commentary for each recommendation has been omitted.

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LISTENING: A FORGOTTEN BASIC SKILL

Though an often overlooked communication skill, listening is a key to effective learning. Reading and writing have long been considered the prima donnas of basic communication, but listening is the method we use most often in both school and private life. The average adult spends about 45 percent of the waking day in listening situations, 31 percent in speaking situations, about 12 percent reading, and about 10 percent writing. In school, although lecturing is still the primary means of teacher/student communication, listening receives the least amount of instruction of all the basic skills. In other words, present emphasis on the four language arts is inversely proportional to actual use.

St. Edward's University has a special commitment to the poor and the disadvantaged student and has devoted significant energy and resources over its history to serving this population. The most common and most severe difficulties faced by these students relate to language skills. Thus, since research shows that good listening skills can markedly increase a student's academic performance in reading and writing, we added, with help from the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education, a developmental course of listening instruction to our curriculum. All full-time freshmen who score below a minimum percentage on a required listening test are placed in a listening class.

This one-credit course of instruction is based on overcoming several faulty assumptions about the poor listener, including:

- We learn to listen automatically; therefore, training is unnecessary.
- Listening ability depends upon intelligence.
- Listening ability is closely related to hearing acuity.
- We listen as we read.
- We listen well *most of the time*.
- What we hear is what is said.
- Listening is a passive action.
- The listener's personality does not affect the way he/she listens.
- Listening is done with the ears only.

To teach students how to overcome these faulty assumptions, our course curriculum is based on the students learning how to stop:

1. Wasting the differential or slack time between speech and thought. The average high school student can comprehend 400 spoken words per minute. Since a typical lecture is conducted at 200 words per minute, slack time occurs and the students lose their attentiveness. Students need to adjust themselves to this time differential in order not to experience the typical loss of 75 percent of everything they hear within 48 hours. This adjustment can be made by having students practice filling out an anticipatory list of what the instructor will say next. Students then check themselves by listening to what the instructor actually says. If they guess right, it will double their ability to remember. If they are wrong, the contrast between the prediction and the presentation will help the student understand why it was wrong and also to remember the right answer.

2. Regarding the subject or topic as uninteresting. If students cannot identify immediate relevancy or interest in a class, then careful listening is not going to take place. As students develop maturity as listeners, they will come to understand that

few uninteresting subjects exist. They learn that their own attitudes determine whether the class is interesting or not.

3. Pretending to be attentive to the speaker. Students can become very adept at imitating the signs of attentiveness while actually being physically and mentally exhausted. Nodding their heads in agreement or establishing eye contact are techniques of simulating involvement while students are actually preoccupied. Too often, personal problems are brought to class and are focused on during a class period.

4. Criticizing the speaker's style of delivery. When students become distracted by a speaker's style, they will analyze and criticize the delivery instead of concentrating on listening. Thus, the way it's said becomes more important than what is said. Students need to be aware of these distractions and learn to concentrate primarily on the speaker's message.

5. Paying attention to distractions in the student audience. Unfortunately, students who create distractions in the classroom are not uncommon, and poor listeners suffer most. To some extent, students can monitor their own classroom environment by asking other students to reduce the noise level. However, learning to tolerate noises or movement by concentrating harder may be the only long-term solution to the problem.

6. Listening only for facts. If students record only the facts offered by teachers, they are not getting all they should as listeners. Good listeners are able to extract details from a lecture and integrate them with main ideas for a comprehensive view of the presentation.

7. Using inappropriate notetaking techniques. Research has shown that there is no one right way to take notes; it is an individual practice which depends on the person taking the notes, the type of class, and the teacher giving the lecture. Students need to know that no matter how they take notes, it is important to compare notes with other classmates or the teacher to make sure they are recording the essential information. If one method doesn't work, another can be tried.

8. Becoming overstimulated. When students overreact to teacher biases or opinions, their concentration may diminish. If the rhetoric of the lecture arouses passion more than reason, the message is lost. Students need to be able to recognize biased views so they will learn to evaluate what is really being said.

9. Letting emotion-laden words cause interference. Similarly, every student has his/her own psychological sore spots which are sensitized by particular "taboo" words or phrases. When teachers use them in lectures, student perceptions may become impaired because their values or ideals have been violated. If students talk about their emotional biases and the sources of these biases, they can avoid over-responding.

10. Evading difficult material. Poor listeners do not welcome challenging listening situations. Most TV programs they watch do not discuss complex ideas, and poor listeners often hinder their intellectual growth by choosing less challenging courses.

Three hundred and fifty college freshmen have taken our developmental listening course since we began, and our follow-up data clearly shows that classroom listening training will increase a student's academic skill level, especially in the other language arts. The introduction of listening instruction into the college curriculum seems to provide needed continuity for basic skills programs. In addition, by providing all faculty with information about listening and encouraging their participation in the development of such a course, developers of a listening program will see an improvement in classroom instruction.

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LISTENING TO SILENT PARTNERS

For most of our lecturing career, we dance with silent partners. As we stand before our classes spinning out our stories, the dance we do with our students' minds may be graceful, even masterful, but, except for an occasional question, our partners by and large sit quiet, even glassy-eyed in their seats. Many are silent partners in a four-year dance.

But student silence is deceptive. It hides those active, multi-form responses, those mental steps which students make in reply to the material we offer. As W. J. McKeachie, Director of the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching at the University of Michigan, underscores in a recent article, each student recodes the lecture with a unique information processing style. One digests material well, another poorly. One quickly, the next slowly. Some creatively improvise and translate while others record with memorex fidelity. Hushed silence, although it may be an appropriate compliment to the dazzling lecture in progress, conceals a multitude of processing schemes, and whether any one of them adds to or detracts from the educational dance is usually not known until it is almost too late--after the first test or assignment. McKeachie claims that we know enough about processing styles to anticipate them in our lectures, to listen even to silent partners, and to boost the educational wattage of our lectures in the process.

Information sticks to the ground longest when it is "chunked." That is one of the first messages. While listening to a lecture, students are using short-term memory, but Short Term Memory works according to surprising rules. Generally, it holds no more than seven units at a time, and this apparent restriction plays no favorites with disciplines or subjects. Here humanists and scientists, nurses and economists, are created equal. But units can be hooked up or chunked in order to expand the total amount of remembered information. For instance, as the cognitive psychologist Robert Solso suggests, if the seven letter units F, B, I, U, S, S, and R are chunked into two units (FBI, USSR), then five units are free for more information like PHD, CIA, IRS, and USA. "The 'capacity' for Short Term Memory, then," Solso concludes, "may be limited to seven units, but the density of information in a unit may vary enormously." How often do we self-consciously create lectures with "density?" Teaching becomes, then, more a matter of arranging material in powerful ways than just an exercise in "presenting the material." Why not a T-shirt: "Good chunkers make good teachers?"

A second message is that *students employ different "attention strategies."* Sorrowfully, most of them give out after the first ten minutes of class. Hartley and Davies found, for example, that "students recalled 70 percent of the material covered in the first ten minutes, and only 20 percent of the material covered in the last ten minutes." After the first 25 minutes of class, then, I may need to serve pillows--unless, of course, I maximize recall by getting and keeping the students' attention.

McKeachie stresses that *change captures student attention* and increases the probability of the lecture's success. It could be a variation in the pitch of the voice,

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a shift in intensity or in the pace of the presentation, combined with a change in facial expression, gesture, or movement. Since auditory attention tends to change as the eyes move and since the eyes tend to follow moving objects, you will be less effective as a lecturer--other things being equal (which they never are)--if you remain a sitting target behind a desk for 50 minutes.

It is not only style, however, that enhances the attention rate. *The substance of a lecture, especially in those crucial first ten minutes, can stimulate curiosity by spotlighting gaps in the student's picture of the world.* Textbook publishers have invested considerable money in finding that prequestions in a text stimulate readers to read on and provide necessary clues to the most valuable information in the chapter. Prequestions in lectures which play to things students want to learn and highlight things you want students to learn can be invaluable tools in sparking response and continued interest. Some feel that concern for what the teacher wants of the student either misses the point of higher education or encourages infantile dependency, but P. N. Rover found out in assessing the role of learning objectives that students learn more from a lecture when they clearly understand what they are supposed to learn.

Finally, *what students learn is influenced by how students learn.* Marton and Saljo claim that two quite different strategies are used by students to digest educational material, one they call "surface processing" and the other "deep processing." Surface processors take verbatim notes and move very slowly beyond what the lecturer provides in class. Deep processors, on the other hand, translate the material into their own words, spell out implications, and make applications. The surface processor asks, "Will you repeat that once again so I can get it all down?" The deep processor asks, "Will you repeat that once again so I can take it all apart?" We tend to value deep processors, of course, because they are more involved with the lecture and the course although in any given class they probably are in the minority. If a student is not a deep processor, however, s/he will not be able to take lecture material (or text material for that matter) and turn it into an insightful essay, creative research, or enlightened practice--regardless of our exhaustive instructions.

Yet you can use the lecture to teach deep processing. Highlighting connections, asking questions which stimulate new syntheses, and encouraging personal applications begin the shift. One untried technique which would get to the heart of the problem quite efficiently is to collect student lecture notes and assess the degree to which they translate or summarize, report or spot new connections.

Of course, none of this helps assess what is important enough to chunk, give attention to, or linger with at deeper levels. But it does suggest that if we want our students to dance well with us, we must be as attentive to the steps they take as to the music we play.

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For further information

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TRANSPORTING THE CURRICULUM INTO THE NEXT CENTURY

I would like to suggest four major principles for making intelligent and sensitive curricular decisions for today's adult students: (1) the content must have utility for the learner; (2) the content needs to be relevant to the learner's life; (3) the content needs to be presented through multisensory learning activities; (4) the content needs to be cross-disciplinary.

Utility

Consider whether or not your educational experience enhances the learner's ability to provide for herself, to make a living. Here are several examples to think about.

(1) A student with a reading problem is given an assignment from his plumbing journal during his morning reading class.

(2) A communications teacher gets feedback from an auto mechanics teacher to discover what kinds of reading manuals are used in the trade course. He determines the reading level required to read the auto specifications manual. Looking at the text, he tries to decide what communications skills are necessary in order for his students to successfully complete the auto mechanics curriculum and then to function in the work-a-day world.

(3) A community college biology teacher whose student aspires to become an environmental protection technologist finds out what skills will be required of her. She finds out the different needs that majors in the health careers have from the same biology course.

(4) A chemistry instructor wants to know how many of her students are in allied health sciences, how many are nursing students, how many are in technological or engineering fields. The answers to these questions do, in fact, affect how the instructor presents content during the semester.

Relevance

Bernard L. Strehler's landmark work on aging and cellular deterioration suggests that the human brain has a finite capacity for information. As the information storage tanks fill, old information is selected out or fades away. Only that which is important to the learner is maintained in the memory store. If Strehler is right about memory storage, then the whole notion of curriculum must be critically re-examined.

Curriculum decisions need to be made more on the basis of the present and future, not just what worked or seemed to work in the past. Here are examples:

(1) A reading teacher seeking to interest black students selects I Am Third by Gale Sayers which speaks of the feelings of growing up black in a white society. That selection captures the readers' emotions and gets them involved. After they become engaged in such content, the teacher can move on to other titles and topics.

(2) A sociology teacher who knows her students frequently watch TV asks probing questions about phoniness and realness, winners and losers, about various lifestyles apparent on TV. She readily taps a considerable body of material that generally is of high interest to her students.

(3) A literature instructor, working with inner-city and ghetto adults, teaches that poetry is self-defense. He shows them how words affect their everyday lives, how advertisements communicate, how the misuse of language occurs in politics, how words have been used against them, how images have been used to force them into certain decisions.

Multisensory

We have entered a new era in which all our sensory skills must be cultivated if written symbols and words themselves are to fulfill their deeper purpose. Messages--powerful messages--are sent nonverbally. Communication in the classroom should occur through our sight, our hearing, our skin, and our taste buds as well as through the written and spoken word. Multisensory approaches can be especially useful with poorly motivated students. Basic skills programs in public education have measured significant improvement in their populations when the learning experience is enriched through contact with the arts. In his book *The Early World*, Elwyn S. Richardson describes an art-centered approach he has used. He found that getting students to respond to their rural, somewhat provincial surroundings through their aesthetic senses provided an impetus for general learning. He started by teaching students to work with clay sculpture and pottery because they were the more warmly received, and then based on the students' genuine and spontaneous responses to these activities, he moved on to language dramatization, graphic arts, construction, and printmaking.

Cross-disciplinary

We are back again to the issue of context. Certainly students dealing in real world situations do not face one-dimensional realities. Meaning is complex. Many issues and influences come together before a single decision can be made. Consider the obvious example of our need for eclectic communication skills. In the past, many institutions have attempted to provide separate courses for improving those skills. Colleges offer reading courses, listening courses, speech courses, and courses in expository writing. At the same time, they require literature courses which include composition work. Unfortunately, these courses are often taught as disparate pieces. They are rarely listed as companion or complementary courses, and they are seldom coordinated in the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages. Ideally, if you are looking at holistic, context-rich learning, these courses would be integrated based on principles of utility, relevance, and learning interest.

Teachers are the key to revolutionizing the curriculum in our colleges because they control content and presentation. Generally, college teachers are trained as subject matter specialists. Yet I would like to speak a resounding word of encouragement for professional development programs that invite teachers to think through the particulars of applying new, more holistic curriculum strategies in their classrooms.

John E. Roueche
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Program in Community College Education
University of Texas at Austin

For further information

See Roueche, John E. with Oscar G. Mink. *Holistic Literacy in College Teaching*, New York: Media Systems Corporation, 1980.

Karen Watkins, Editor
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Innovation Abstracts

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THREE COMMENTS ON IMPROVING THE LECTURE METHOD

Although the lecture method is quite frequently criticized, it remains the most popular means of teaching in most colleges and universities--probably because lecturing is often the most economical way of bringing large groups of students into direct personal contact with a teacher who can combine mastery of the subject matter with enthusiasm for the discipline. The lecture has been the subject of a good deal of research scrutiny in the past few years. Evidence from this research suggests that although students taught by the lecture method do as well on final examinations as students taught by other methods, there are nevertheless certain serious limitations in the effectiveness of lectures as far as maintaining attention, conveying information, and fostering positive student attitudes are concerned. On the basis of this research, here are ten practical suggestions to improve the effectiveness of lectures:

1. Give students practice in remembering lecture material by asking questions from time to time or providing quizzes at the end of the lecture.
2. Try to provide hints or "cues" during the course of the lecture that students may use to recognize and remember important points.
3. Use examples and images whenever possible in explaining concepts.
4. Avoid non-stop lecturing: divide your lectures into short segments--ten to fifteen minute segments are ideal.
5. Try to be enthusiastic and expressive when lecturing.
6. Encourage active participation by students during the course of a lecture. This can be done by having them work problems and answer multiple choice questions which are inserted periodically (perhaps via transparencies).
7. Tell students when they have responded correctly. If you ignore student responses, you will tend to extinguish them altogether.
8. Before beginning the lecture, tell students how the session will be organized. A brief outline on the board or overhead at the beginning of class is an excellent means of helping students gear their thoughts to the topic(s) for the day. Leave this outline visible throughout the lecture if possible.
9. Avoid continuous note-taking by allotting special times for taking notes, providing lecture handouts, and so forth. Handouts of diagrams or tables which would be difficult for students to copy in their notes are most helpful.
10. At the end of class summarize the important points which were covered during the lecture and give the students some idea of what to anticipate.

Though all of the above points can make a lecture a better learning experience for students, research clearly indicates that the characteristic which is most related to learning is instructor *enthusiasm*. Enthusiasm cannot be successfully faked, but it is possible for you to influence the degree to which your enthusiasm shows. Often your enthusiasm about a lecture may be a function of the degree to which you have prepared for it. It may be more difficult to be enthusiastic about a lecture you have given several times before, but if you have reworked the lecture, learned some new things, added examples from your students' lives or from current events, and come up with some new ideas, you will probably be able to approach the lecture with much more enthusiasm. The teaching/learning experience can and should be an exciting one.

From a summary by Karron Lewis in the Center for Teacher Effectiveness Newsletter, Vol. 2, No. 5 (March, 1981), The University of Texas at Austin.

The Lecture

The process of delivering lectures provides immediate feedback to faculty regarding their current thinking, and it offers personal-social satisfaction to instructors because they can project their personalities and philosophies to the class. In fact, college and university professors derive more satisfaction from teaching than from any of their other responsibilities (Ladd & Lipset, 1976). Students also tend to enjoy the psychological benefits associated with witnessing a live performance and interacting with a role model, and they generally appreciate the fact that information is presented from a here and now perspective. Furthermore, as suggested, a greater proportion of the time invested in a lecture course seems to be on a relatively high intellectual plane. Faculty members indicate that lecturing stimulates them to engage in more reading, thinking, writing, and rethinking than individualized instruction does. If this is so, the institution as well as the individual has a stake in preserving the lecture method. Development of new ideas and fresh perspectives seems to be an arduous process which generally requires a lot of thinking and rethinking. The learning gains which individualized instruction can contribute to current students may be counterbalanced by learning losses for future students if the intellectual vigor of the faculty declines.

From the August 18, 1980 issue of TEACHING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN.

* * *

Lecture Guidelines

1. Fit the material to the time at your disposal. Restrict your aim to less than a handful of primary topics and consider specific ways of engaging the audience in each one. Do not elaborate too much or outline important ideas leaving the audience grasping for particulars.
2. Seek hard and unrelentingly for precise examples and illustrations and for ways of breaking up a single presentational mode. Take advantage of physical presence and movement, and employ the blackboard and other such devices.
3. Begin by stimulating the interest of the audience. Alluding to the personal or to the world outside, arousing curiosity, providing surprise, and using casual humor are some of the ways of enhancing beginnings.
4. Stay loose. Develop an ability to improvise and to sustain an improvisational quality even in a carefully structured presentation.
5. Provide the audience with frequent breathing spaces and opportunities for questions. Better to talk too little and stop short than to go on too long.
6. Don't break the connections. Provide an ending for every lecture but maintain a continuity with what has gone before and what lies ahead.
7. Remember you're onstage. Develop and use a range of voice, gesture, and physical movement that is appropriate to your style, to the material, and to the occasion.
8. Be aware of your listeners. Be guided by the living audience and the pressing need of striking up discourse with as many as possible.

From a summary on the lecture method by Kenneth Eble in The Craft of Teaching.

Karen Watkins, Editor
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Innovation Abstracts

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WHAT YOU CAN DO TO IMPROVE STUDENT WRITING

All of us who have taught have experienced frustration from time to time about student writing. We have wished for greater skills, pondered the truly perplexing issues surrounding needed remediation, and wondered what any one teacher could do to make an impression on a problem that students carry with them from frequent unsuccessful learning experiences throughout their educational histories.

At the risk of oversimplification, there are two genuine imperatives. First, students must be asked to write. Second, all instructors must assume some responsibility for the encouragement of skill development in this critical area. Research at The University of Texas at Austin would seem to indicate that students are not often asked to write and that feedback is scarce on those few papers written. Thus, among the students we serve there has not been much real dialogue about the writing process. Since there is so much to be done, *the responsibility cannot fall totally on the shoulders of the English faculty if substantive student change is to occur.* This Abstract offers food for thought about the writing process, hopefully providing fresh perspectives from which to plan teaching strategies.

The Nature of the Writing Process

Written language came into existence because of a basic human need to communicate over time and space, to encounter beyond face-to-face situations, to remember clearly when the original impulse may have faded, to commemorate something of worth. These needs still exist. In spite of frequent suppositions that the need for written language is declining, the personal impulse to communicate beyond the immediate--with or without the help of technologies like the typewriter, word processor, computer, or tape recorder--is still strong. Consider the spontaneous, simultaneous response to John F. Kennedy's death by hundreds of Americans who sent poems to newspapers expressing their grief.

Perhaps the ambivalence about the utility of writing skills in a media-saturated culture is in part a reflection of a decline in reading skills and habits among our population. But time is also a factor. It generally takes more time and effort to write out a thought than to simply record it using an audio/video memory device. However, the assimilation time for a reader is much less than that for a listener. An average lecture speed is 200 words per minute, while an average student listener is able to comprehend about twice that amount of material. He or she must concentrate through the "spaces" to really listen. In reading, the pace can be much brisker and is at the total discretion of the reader. Thus the writer has stored information in the form most quickly retrievable by an audience.

Here are several interesting facts and suppositions of rhetoricians about writing:

- As a species, we would not be able to rely on written language if it were not possible to think symbolically.
- Written language must create its own context to be truly transferable to another place and time.
- The sensory-motor component in writing, the involvement of hand dexterity, makes the kinesthetic appeal of writing greater than for reading or viewing.
- Recent research at the University of London documents that by the time a student is eighteen, eighty percent of what he or she writes is to tell the reader/instructor what is already known. Thus the original function of written lan-

guage and the meaning of audience has shifted. Further, if what motivates language development is the need to communicate something not yet known, such a constraint may well be debilitating.

- In contrast to reading, writing involves an audience. Even when keeping a personal log or diary, the writer is other-oriented. This sense of implied audience may explain in part why writing down thoughts focuses ideas more clearly than simply reading about them.
- To write, it is necessary to read. Although the reverse is not true, neither skill prospers without the other.
- Teachers of writing need to stress function, rather than form; to encourage expression of thoughts rather than to concentrate on rules.

Anxiety about writing papers, frequently the result of an emphasis on rules rather than process, is not uncommon among adults in our college classes. Instead of becoming a means to an end, following a long series of rules becomes an end in itself. Students with an anxious need to please the instructor let these arbitrary shoulds become a kind of tyranny for them. They are victims of idealized images of the writing process--a belief that the meaning to be communicated is already there, and they must wind their way through strenuous behaviors--don't repeat the same word; don't begin a sentence with a conjunction; the first sentence of a paper is critical; avoid trite language, etc.--in order to arrive at that already established ideal. The anxiety is further heightened by an implicit belief that the reader also knows all these rules. What happens is that these would-be writers are censoring most of the language that comes to mind--leaving them inarticulate and unable to express even the simplest ideas.

Thus writing becomes a series of self-defeating behaviors. The often used antidote--revision--may not work for an anxious student until a break in this pattern occurs. The key is for writing to be seen as a process that allows for change at every stage, and to remember that the original basic intent of all communication is not to say something perfectly, nor to say what your audience already knows, but to communicate something that would be usefully or happily remembered beyond face-to-face encounters.

Strategies for Improving Writing

Certainly not all poor writers are anxious in the manner described here. Some are lazy; some are poorly skilled; some have basic verbal aptitudes but are simply unaccustomed to the mental effort involved in writing. Here are some basic strategies that would seem useful for all these groups:

(1) As often as possible, let students write for you what you do not already know. Let them bring their own perspectives to the communication process.
(2) Present yourself as a responsive, positive reader; encourage developing writers.
(3) Encourage spontaneity by the nature of the writing assignments given, by the way they are assigned, by offering ungraded as well as graded opportunities. Let students respond to open-ended questions or evaluate outcomes from a personal vantage. Ask them to observe and describe relevant events.
(4) Observe the writing process, and then, in some detail, talk to students about their writing habits. Describe these habits as vividly as possible.
(5) From time to time, practice giving "over the shoulder" feedback to students while they write. This immediate response demythologizes some of the more threatening blocks or misunderstandings of writing.
(6) Give opportunities for peer discussion of the ideas contained in student writing.

Nancy Armes, Executive Director
National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development

For further information order "Interrelationships of Reading and Writing." NCTE Series, Stock #72504, Convention Seminar Cassettes, Hollywood, California 91605.

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ASSESSMENT AT ALVERNO COLLEGE

We have made a major commitment to assessment at Alverno College. Indeed, we consider the assessment techniques and criteria as important as the topics and texts of our courses. We are also committed to assessing student competence out of the classroom. *Assessment at Alverno is a systematic, creative process which begins by clearly defining student outcomes.* We began this effort in the late 1960's, when our faculty reached a consensus that what a student actually knows or is able to do is the heart of any learning experience. We developed a framework of eight general abilities which, taken together, would define the outcomes of a successful liberal education.

How to Design Assessment

Each semester, faculty members and departments work to make explicit the abilities from among the eight general abilities that are implicit outcomes of their courses, to turn them into something concrete and observable a student can be asked to do. After several years, we have identified an underlying principle that supports our successful approaches: Begin by being as clear as possible about outcomes. And we have designed a process to do that.

An instructor planning an introductory literature course, for example, might well identify "Analysis" as a crucial ability. In the poetry section, she knows that one or two overzealous students will normally hunt for "hidden meanings" while others who "just can't see all that in a poem" conclude that they had better forget about poetry. She might therefore wish to get the class into the habit of looking carefully at a poem before asking anything at all about its meaning. Such a goal fits the Alverno faculty's definition of the first level of analysis, "to observe."

How does the instructor design an assessment for this ability? She begins by trying to break out the various elements of observing. What does a person who observes a poem well do? The instructor might arrive at a list of components like this: "distinguish what's stated from what's implied; identify major features that make the work what it is; distinguish important parts; see what's there; see what you are supposed to be looking for." As she sets priorities among these components, the instructor begins moving into the design of the assessment instrument as well.

Let us assume that the instructor has selected Robert Frost's "In Hardwood Groves," for use in the assessment. Her instrument design could consist of a single class hour in which each student is given a copy of the poem and a set of instructions for a two-part exercise. The first part might ask the student to spend 30 minutes reading the poem, writing an exact account of the things and events described, and indicating the speaker's attitude, giving evidence of how she determines it. The second half hour might involve the student in small group work, comparing notes.

The instructor then sets criteria by which to judge student responses, an imposing task which has been made far simpler by defining a concrete assessment situation. If the student can indeed "see what's there," a top priority at this initial level, then the elements she identifies will include most or all of those verifiable from the poem's text--e.g., leaves, trees, the earth, flowers, the leather glove of the simile. Her ability to "distinguish the important parts" can be judged by checking to see that her description includes the major elements, however many others she may also identify. How well she can "distinguish what's obvious from what's implied" will surface in whether or not she lists implied elements--and whether or not she notes them as such. Asking for evidence of the speaker's attitude also elicits this ability.

Having administered the assessment, the instructor would record her judgments according to the criteria and arrange for some form of feedback to the student--written remarks, perhaps accompanied by an in-class review of the assessment for the whole group or by individual conferences, depending on how much of the course she wants to devote to this particular learning experience. Evaluation and redesign would occur a number of ways. The instructor herself would weigh how well the instrument elicited "observing behavior" and challenged students to *develop* their awareness and abilities as observers. She would probably also share the assessment and its results with colleagues in the English department and in our Analysis Competence Division.

An assessment may appear little changed from what students had formerly been asked to do on a familiar exercise. Or it may involve days of effort on the students' part in complex and innovative activities. What distinguishes even the simplest, most familiar assessment, however, is the presence of the specific component abilities being sought and the criteria according to which the student's performance will be judged. Equally important, the student's learning experiences prior to the assessment have been planned to foster those same abilities. And she has known from the outset what methods and criteria would be used in the assessment and why.

Whether it is simple and familiar or complex and innovative, whether it takes part of a classroom hour or most of three days in a TV-radio studio or on a nursing home ward, each assessment requires the participation of one or more trained assessors--many from the community. The assessor carefully observes and records the student's performance, noting illustrative examples. The assessor judges whether the criteria were adequately demonstrated and either gives the student individual feedback or prepares a detailed analysis from which others (perhaps the course instructor) may do so.

Assessment at Alverno has become, we believe, a more consistently reliable process. Students get the benefit of many sources of feedback, frequent assessment opportunities, and different types of assessment strategies. Faculty receive feedback from colleagues on their assessment designs and institutional support for implementing them.

The Alverno College Faculty

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Karen Watkins, Editor
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COMPUTERS AND LIBERAL EDUCATION

There was a time when instruction was mostly made up of oral interchanges between apprentices and a master teacher. Then came the widespread availability of books, and the process of education changed. The introduction of a new technology, printing, made possible new ways of teaching and learning. Much of the old process still remains--it is still common to lecture and to engage students in discussion--but it is clear that the widespread availability of books fundamentally changed the teaching process. In the next two decades computer technology will have a similar impact on teaching.

Computers have been around for quite a while without revolutionizing education in the way that some had predicted. But there is presently reason to believe that the gradual incursion of the technology will accelerate dramatically. The Gutenberg revolution did not occur with the invention of printing. It came over 200 years later with the widespread availability of books. In the last few years a similar trend has begun with computers as dramatic decreases in costs and the development of micro-computers have put the technology within reach of everyone.

I propose to list briefly some of the present uses and coming extensions of the technology that I feel will most affect teaching in the humanities and social sciences. First, however, I need to point out the place the technology will have in the total teaching environment. The advent of the new technology embodied in the book did not eliminate teachers to leave students sitting with noses buried in books. We will not be firing faculties to have colleges become places for students to spend hours over a keyboard while peering at a television screen. Computers will take their place among other resources while many of the old and tried teaching techniques remain. But at the same time, the total educational process will have changed in fundamental ways.

The Computer As a Super Calculator. The capacity of computers to collate large amounts of information and perform complex logical and mathematical operations in fractions of a second has extended teaching possibilities in the social sciences. Students can be involved in learning projects which have more scope and reality.

The Computer As a Super Tutor. Computer-assisted instruction, drill and practice, and computerized testing will expand directly into all social science and humanities fields about as rapidly as the technology becomes available. Some have agreed that availability of computer programs will limit these applications, but with the development of new authoring languages, it will become commonplace for individual faculty members and students to write their own short programs. The fact that third-graders are presently teaching themselves programming at some experimental sites and that learning to program is far easier than learning to drive a car, suggests that teachers will begin using this tool as they see its utility in their own teaching. While the widespread production of computer software raises issues about quality control, these are the same problems we neglect today when we fail to question individual teacher's syllabi, course assignments and tests. What is possible with the transfer of some of these teaching documents to the computer is that good techniques will drive out some of the bad as programs are shared and "published."

The Computer As a Super Typewriter. Word processing equipment is changing the nature of composing and editing written material. What have been separate and parallel expressions of the technology in computers and word processors will merge in the future into more general purpose machines. This will mean that teachers can expect all student papers to be typed and, since the student's terminal or microcomputer will have an editing facility, papers should be in neat, final form. Furthermore, because of the ease of student editing, teachers will be able to require rewriting of the material without imposing undue hardship. Since we know that one of the major factors distinguishing good writers shows up in editing and reworking written material, extended practice in writing should help instruction in this area. In addition, already existing computer programs which check spelling, punctuation, and grammatical structure could pre-screen student papers for grading on these more mechanical skills. This would leave the teacher free to focus on higher order issues such as the development of arguments, the relationship of ideas, and the style of writing.

The Computer As a Super Laboratory. Computer simulation has rapidly become more sophisticated. Educational uses will include both computer-generated and computer-controlled means to present analogs to educational experiences in laboratory and field work. Developments of this use, however, will be slower since they will be more limited by cost and hardware constraints, particularly for simulation of complex environments. Most of the applications will be in the social sciences.

The Computer As a Super Blackboard. Computer graphics have many applications in the display of complex information, especially when the information needs to be transformed while one is teaching. Other applications include artistic productions. This use of computers should expand rapidly.

The Computer As a Mini-Library. Experiments using computers to store hypertext are already over five years old. Enormous storage capacity and rapid retrieval of information make computers an excellent vehicle for structuring information. Ideally, any teacher might have his or her own "library" organized by its own modification of Dewey Decimal or Library of Congress structure. In such a library any footnote inserted in any item could immediately be used to locate and retrieve the other item. In addition, one could ask for all of the books or items related to "X" and have this electronic reference librarian look them up and report. Reality will lag behind the ideal for some time, largely because of the costs of "filing" items in such a library. However, more limited-scope structured data-bases like this will become more common.

The Computer As a Super Telephone. Computer conferencing does not merely involve typing instead of talking over the telephone. It is more like a group of individuals creating the "mini-library" mentioned above. Queries, comments, and replies are linked to each other. Individuals can join in or observe on their own schedule, knowing that the information will be there. The final result, perhaps edited or structured differently by different participants, can be a paper, conclusion, or plan which would have been difficult for the group to produce over several telephone conversations or even via an extended face-to-face meeting. In teaching this will be used to promote student discussion of subject matter and commentary on course materials among students and between student and teacher. What is perhaps most significant about this application, however, is the fact that the computer is not an anti-humanistic tool. Even more than the book, the computer can draw people together to work on common tasks.

The list of potentially positive effects on teaching mentioned above will not come about automatically with the introduction of the technology. Just as there are many books extant that were not worth publishing, we will have to suffer with some computerized trash. But in the long run, I am sure that our judgment on this newer technology will be similar to our feelings about that older, print technology. It will have fundamentally changed our teaching in ways we will not want to give up.

Richard R. Johnson, Research Director
Exxon Education Foundation

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THE SYLLABUS: PUTTING IT DOWN ON PAPER

The most common problems students bring to the Advising Center are that they do not clearly understand what is expected of them in their classes, and even if they can visualize the product their instructor has asked for--paper, exam, presentation--they do not know how to produce it. They do not understand the objectives of their classes nor the benefits of their learning. They are uncertain what should be in their notes and what they should be looking for in their texts. They don't know how to anticipate the coverage of examinations, and they're not sure what kind of papers their instructors really want. In freshman and sophomore students, the problem is compounded by a lack of basic study skills. They do not know how to take effective lecture notes, prepare for an examination, or do library research.

At the same time, one of the commonest experiences of college teaching is the vague disappointment one feels looking through a set of papers or exams and realizing that they are not up to one's expectations--that students have misunderstood an assignment or prepared poorly the wrong materials for an exam. The frustration can sink to despair on those occasions when questions reveal that no one has been listening to our instructions and explanations. The problem seems not to be rooted in any ill-will or obtuseness on the part of students, but rather in inattention and an inability to engage effectively in the learning process.

I'd like to suggest that much of the difficulty might be alleviated by more effective communication--in writing--between instructor and student, and by increased attention in class to the process of learning subject matter. The best way I know to accomplish these goals is by preparation and effective use of detailed and useful course syllabi and assignment sheets.

A useful syllabus is one which students will both want and need to refer to frequently over the semester. It should include:

1. *a clear statement of course objectives.* Objectives should be understood to mean here not merely mastery of course content, but also the development of skills--what students will learn to do as well as what they will learn about. Students' sense of the relevance of a course is enhanced when they understand that they will learn skills that can be applied elsewhere later. Your goals for your course in science fiction will, of course, include that students become familiar with the history and salient features of the genre, but might also include their developing a set of personal criteria for distinguishing between good science fiction novels and junk fiction.

2. *a description of the means by which the course objectives will be met.* This is not a list of assignments, but a description of classroom and study activities: lecture, discussion, reading, research, panel presentations, lab work, etc. The descriptions should be referenced clearly to course objectives so students can see how the things you and they are doing will lead to accomplishing objectives. Such descriptions will help them to understand your rationale for the way you teach: the way you use class time, why you assign the work you do. It seems to me that it is better to make these matters clear to students than to leave them hidden.

One good way to phrase the description of activities is as two lists: things you will do and things they will do. You might also include here a statement about the amount of study time you assume they will need--for example, that you estimate that a student with little prior knowledge of the subject will study about two hours daily.

3. *a list of the work products to be submitted, their relative grade weight, and your grading criteria.* Simply listing the work due, together with the due dates and weight, will save endless questions later. Putting your grading criteria on paper at the beginning of the term will give students an idea of your expectations for their performance. You needn't go into detail describing work products and criteria at the beginning of the term, but they should be spelled out clearly on written assignments.

4. *a schedule of lecture topics, preparation, and work due.* This might be set up as a table with four columns:

Date/ Week	Lecture Topic and/or Classroom Activities	Class Preparation	Due Dates & Checkpoints

How long and detailed the schedule will be will depend on the complexity and variety of activities. It might be a single page listing lecture topics and reading assignments, or it might be several pages amounting to a cut-down version of your lesson plans. You may find it impossible to project detail for a whole semester, but the initial syllabus should include at least the first few weeks and all major due dates. Written revisions can be distributed periodically, if needed.

5. *a list of student resources.* This will include, of course, a bibliography of required and recommended texts and reserve readings. It might well include alternative textbooks, style manuals, research tools, sample tests on file, and other resources students might find helpful. This list will be more useful to students if it is annotated: indicate whether the item is required or recommended, what its strengths and weaknesses are, why you've assigned or suggested it, how it will help them.

The syllabus should be passed out on the first day of class and gone over in detail. If you've gone to the trouble of preparing a thorough syllabus, you might as well make sure it's understood. I pass them out the first day and go over the objectives. Then I assign the syllabus as part of the next day's preparation and allow plenty of time for discussion. To encourage students to use the syllabus, refer to it often. You might mention it each day as you summarize the day's class activities at the beginning of class, or check preparation with a few random questions at the beginning of class. Once you've established that you use the syllabus and that you expect the students to use it, then they will use it, and many of the procedural questions about your expectations will disappear.

You can extend your concern for clarifying the learning process to writing detailed assignments for the major work products of the course. A term paper assignment, for example, will contain a statement of the objectives of the assignment, a description of the desired product, suggestions for the process of producing the paper, and a list of the grading criteria. Review assignments for major exams can be similarly treated.

There is no question that writing detailed syllabi requires considerable forethought and some hard work during vacations. Still, the benefits are considerable: the contract between you and your class has been made fully clear and concrete at the beginning; both you and your students have an agenda to refer to for preparation; and you have made your best effort to be genuinely helpful to your students. One additional benefit is that course evaluations can be drawn from information on the syllabus to provide you with detailed and useful feedback on your teaching and on the course as a whole.

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Karen Watkins, Editor
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COMMUNITY COLLEGES ON THE PLATEAU

Recent data on community college goals collected by the Educational Testing Service in a field test of its new Community College Goals Inventory (CCGI) indicate that old ideals have receded and new ideals have not yet emerged. The CCGI was administered to faculty members, administrators, trustees, students, and community groups concerning their opinions about the goals of their local college. These respondents were asked to indicate how much importance IS currently assigned by their college to each of twenty goals and how much importance SHOULD BE assigned. The differing results across groups and across goals is quite interesting.

All of the groups agree that community colleges have a major obligation to provide vocational/technical education for students. Respondents also indicated that their colleges are addressing this need and that it is one of the top two goals currently being carried out. The situation is comparable when the goal named is general education. All constituent groups ranked general education among their top five SHOULD BE goals, and feel that the goal of general education currently is given very high priority by their college.

One of the most surprising results of this study is that equal access, a founding principle of the community college, does not make the top five SHOULD BE goals of *any* constituent group. What these data seem to say is that while the constituent groups of community colleges are not turning their backs on making college more accessible, there is a feeling that present practices with respect to accessibility are acceptable, and other issues now have higher priority.

The SHOULD BE goal statements that are pushing the issue of accessibility relatively lower are those concerned with teaching students who have already obtained access. Intellectual orientation and developmental/remedial preparation are two goals which are given high SHOULD BE rankings by all five constituent groups. These goals include such concerns as teaching students how to solve problems, synthesize knowledge, think openly about new ideas; and recognize basic skill needs, provide developmental programs to address different learning styles and rates, respectively. Faculty think teaching students intellectual skills and appreciations is highly important (ranked among their top three SHOULD BE goals). Only students appear well satisfied with the current emphasis on intellectual orientation.

Developmental/remedial preparation of students is a recent and special instructional goal for community colleges, and dissatisfaction with current attention to it is evident. The discrepancy between what IS and what SHOULD BE in the realm of developmental/remedial education is very high for the three groups representing leadership in community colleges - faculty, administrators, and trustees. People in the community are also sensitive to the problem. It seems to stand today as one of the major dissatisfactions in community colleges.

One of the ways to find solutions to either new or old problems is through innovation and experimentation but faculty rank innovation as thirteenth in SHOULD BE

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goals and seventeenth in current importance among the twenty goals of the CCGI. Administrators and trustees offer no more hope for optimism; they rank innovation among the lowest five IS and SHOULD BE goals.

Finally, we should take a look at the remaining goals ranked among the top five in SHOULD BE rankings by any constituent group. Students are especially interested in personal development and in counseling and advising; administrators are interested in effective management; and trustees are concerned with accountability. The greatest dissatisfaction lies in student perceptions of the attention given to their personal development and to counseling and advising. Students are joined in this concern by citizens of the community.

The visionary scenario often imaged of moving community colleges off their current plateau through an orientation toward lifelong learning has little apparent energy waiting to be converted to action. The goal of lifelong learning is perceived by most constituent groups as only moderately important and it seems to be getting relatively more attention than most people think it should. Community services as a potential rallying goal fares even worse. It may be that the constituencies of community colleges simply see the goal of providing community services as unrealistic for the 1980s.

I have left until last the discussion of the goal that is of paramount importance to the leadership of community colleges - and a cause for immense dissatisfaction. Faculty give the goal of college community top priority in their SHOULD BE ratings but rank it near the bottom in current emphasis. This goal is defined in the CCGI as "Fostering a climate in which there is faculty and staff commitment to the goals of the college, open and candid communication, open and amiable airing of differences, and mutual trust and respect among faculty, students, and administrators." It appears that morale or mutual trust and respect is less prevalent on community college campuses today than it was in the early 1970s. These characteristics are as desirable as ever, but the discrepancy between what people would like to have and what they think they do have on their campuses has grown in a distressing direction.

The future of the community colleges cannot be written yet. Possibly the spirit and cohesiveness present in the founding of new institutions is a one-time phenomenon, and community colleges are now entering a less exuberant phase of maturity, consolidating the major social reforms of the 1940s and 1950s. Possibly, the head start made by community colleges into developmental/remedial education can be parlayed into a position of national leadership on a problem that is of increasing concern now to a majority of institutions of higher education. The lifelong learning movement, though not a potential rallying goal in and of itself, may possibly provide the spark that will reunite community colleges in a sense of common mission and move us off of the plateau.

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For further information see complete article in the Journal of Higher Education, 1981, Vol. 52, No. 2.

*Dr. Cross will be the keynote speaker at the fourth annual NISOD Summer Conference "Promoting Great Teaching: A Professional Development Imperative" to be held May 25-28, 1982.

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*OF TESTS AND TECHNIQUES

We've all heard these words: "You will have one hour to complete this test. All answers must be marked on the answer sheet. Make no marks on the test booklet. Use a no. 2 pencil. Be sure to follow test directions carefully. Ready? Begin." And you're off! You feel nervous. You want to do well. You know that you should have studied more. Mostly you wish that you were somewhere else.

Our culture is a test-taking one. In the twelve years of your elementary and secondary education, you probably completed 2,600 weekly quizzes. In two years of college, you'll take another 50 mid-term and final exams and if you decide to continue for another two years, add another 50 exams! Let's not forget the standardized tests that you have taken and the future tests you may take for business or government. But don't despair--you can improve your test scores. Just read on for some tips.

We take different types of tests, but they all have one major point in common: a test is a sample of behavior at one point in time. This means that test scores will change from one test administration to the next. In fact, there are numerous reported cases of I.Q.'s changing by as much as 30 or 40 points between tests! Another reason that scores will vary between tests is the test-taker's unfamiliarity with specific types of tests.

There are essentially two types of tests: maximal performance tests and typical performance tests. Maximal performance tests (I.Q. tests, classroom or achievement tests, aptitude tests) attempt to measure an individual's best possible performance at that time. You may have taken some kind of admissions test (like the A.C.T. or S.A.T., for example) that was designed to ascertain your level of ability before entering college. These tests can create a great deal of tension for students. If you take these tests more than once, chances are that your score will go up. If you are planning to take this type of test, ask your friends who have taken them to tell you about them and check your bookstore for test manuals which have samples of the questions and the format of the test. The key is to find out as much as you can about the test before you walk in to take it. You'll probably feel less nervous as a result.

The other major type of test is the typical performance test. These (personality tests, interest tests, attitude tests, for example) do not promote as much anxiety as maximal performance tests since there is little preparation needed to take them and there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. These tests are used by counselors to help you with personal, educational and vocational planning.

A new area of testing involves the evaluation of a person's cognitive or thinking style. These tests reveal how you learn best or how you think. For example, some students work well independently and others learn best through a great deal of interaction with other students. By evaluating these styles, counselors can help you improve your learning.

Although there are different types of tests, the techniques to improve your scores on each are similar.

*Editor's Note. This special edition of Innovation Abstracts is intended for student use. Faculty members who wish to do so are encouraged to make copies for their students.

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ASSESSMENT, SOC 0

(1) You may have heard that you can study too much for a test. Not true! When it is possible to prepare for a test, do so. "Overlearning" raises scores and lowers anxiety. It is better to study over a period of time than it is to cram the night before a test. Don't forget that preparation for a test involves talking to friends who have taken similar tests or have taken tests from your instructor before. If other students happen to have their old tests, look at them, too.

(2) Show up on time for your test, but don't arrive too early. If you do arrive at the test site early, stand away from the crowd. This will help you to avoid getting nervous from others' anxiety. If you pay attention to others' worries, your anxiety will increase, too. You don't need that!

(3) Find out in advance if the test has a correction formula. That means, for example, that for every four items you answer incorrectly, one right answer is deducted from your total score. This is an attempt to correct for guessing. So if a formula is used, don't guess unless you can eliminate some of the possible answers.

(4) Eliminate alternatives. In a multiple choice test with four options, if you can eliminate any two of the four answers your chances of choosing correctly are 50-50. If you can't eliminate any answers, if you have no idea, and if there is no correction for guessing, pick the longest answer and go on to the next question. Test authors tend to make correct answers the longest.

(5) Read directions carefully. If you haven't finished reading the directions at the start of the test or if you don't understand the directions, ask the proctor for assistance. That's what they are paid for.

(6) Pace yourself so that you can complete as many questions as possible. Determine how long you can spend on each question. Keep track of the time.

(7) If the test is multiple choice and you must read a "stem" and then select the correct response from alternatives, try to answer the question before you read the choices, then pick the one most similar to your answer.

(8) If the test requires you to read passages and then answer questions based on the reading, read the questions first. This will tell you what to look for, and you'll be in a better position to answer the questions correctly and quickly.

(9) Skip items you are not sure of. If you've seen the material before, but can't remember the answer, your brain will be searching for the information while you work on other items. When the answer comes to you, go back and mark it.

(10) Do not change your answers on multiple choice tests unless you are very uncertain about your initial answer. Research has shown that *only* when you have strong doubts is your second answer more likely to be correct.

(11) Read the questions carefully. On essay tests, note key words such as *compare*, *contrast*, *discuss*, *analyze*, *define*, and *describe*. Do exactly what the question asks! Be direct. If you are unsure of a response to an essay question, rambling on will come across as wordiness. On multiple-choice tests, look out for negative words: "Which of these could not be..." Underline key words.

(12) There is some evidence that you will do better on a test if you are slightly cool. If you are too warm or too comfortable, you can lose your focus.

(13) When finished, recheck your work for clerical corrections only.

(14) Ask to see your tests and scores. By reviewing a test, you learn more about testing and become test-wise.

Tests are necessary to describe levels of knowledge and to assist in making placement decisions. So it is important to develop a healthy, positive attitude toward tests and examinations. Look at it this way: as you master classroom tests, you'll be completing trial runs for more difficult life tests.

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For further information see Sky, Delta Air Lines Inflight Magazine 10 (May 1981).

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INFORMATION OVERLOAD

For the teacher, information demands have mushroomed over the past ten years. She must keep up with an increasing number of changes in her discipline and in teaching approaches. She must get to know a larger, more varied group of students which not only increases the amount of information to be handled, but also stretches the capacity of the teacher's training to meet students' needs at many different levels.

In 1966, Katz and Kahn noted that every year over 1,200,000 articles appear in 60,000 books and 100,000 research reports. Scientific and technical reports have doubled every 20 years since 1800. Having so much information which must be processed by one person may result in information overload.

Miller studied the responses of individuals to information overload:

(1) *omission* - failing to integrate or use some of the information received
(2) *error* - processing the information but inaccurately
(3) *queuing* - lining up the information but delaying reading it
(4) *filtering* - taking in only that information that fits into pre-determined priority categories
(5) *approximation* - gathering only enough information to determine the gist or essential parts and then cutting off the receipt of any further information
(6) *employing multiple or parallel channels* - dividing up the information which must be processed among more people or receiving the same information from more than one source
(7) *escaping from the task altogether.*

Each of these reactions is an attempt to adapt to the amount of information people receive. Yet not all of these responses are functional for an organization. Some foster more effective coping with the problem while others simply protect a person from breakdown but do not solve the problem. Dysfunctional responses are those where the duration is short, where application is to a limited area or where cost is considerable. Omission, error, and escaping the task are, by definition, dysfunctional. Omission, for example, implies that information which may be needed is missing. The lack of this information presents a problem, but it becomes even worse when the ommitted information creates a sequence of errors.

Queuing information can be an effective response to overload. Faculty practice queuing every time they break up the amount of information a student must absorb at one time. This strategy would become ineffective, however, if used when there's no realistic time to acquire the information which is delayed. Change theorists agree that information about a change should be queued or sequenced in such a way that it will be tied to the needs of potential users - from more general awareness information at first to more technical, "how-to-do-it" information once use has begun.

Filtering or selective receiving can also be an effective response to overload. In choosing a syllabus or reading list for a course, a faculty member makes priority decisions about which information is important. Similarly, an organizational hierarchy creates a filtering effect. An administrator collects information about her area, analyzes it, and interprets it. In doing so, she makes decisions about which information to pass on to other administrators. The information passed on is usually distilled. Filtering can be inaccurate or dysfunctional if the individual doing the screening listens only for the familiar and screens out new, different, or complex information.

Using multiple or parallel channels is an effective response to coping with overload. The faculty member who has a number of students researching different (multiple) or the same (parallel) aspects of a problem is delegating the collection of large amounts of information so that she can deal with only the final distillation which may illuminate solutions. Giving information via more than one medium is also an example of using multiple channels. Instructors in information-rich courses often give information in oral and print form to reinforce and enhance student learning.

Reducing Overload

Faculty will have to establish priorities among their several audiences, throwing out lowest priority reading and keeping only high priority reading. Using reading, writing, math or study skills labs or testing centers for the more routine analysis of student work is one way some schools have, in effect, created a branch facility for faculty to reduce the information they must handle. Student conferences do the same thing; while they don't reduce the amount of information, they do keep the deeper, more intense information processing separate. Faculty now use a number of different "middlemen" to aid in handling their information load - peer tutors, teaching assistants, computerized instructional programs, and developmental course instructors are examples.

Another idea for decreasing the amount of information handled is to hire generalists who are able to help out where the demand is greatest. Imagine how much easier teaching might be if there were a cadre of staff able to do routine paper grading; to screen, analyze, and report on all new textbooks for a given course; to read key educational and discipline journals and to route articles to those faculty with an interest in the area; to research the effectiveness of various aspects of your teaching; to write grants for further study in your area; to write computer-assisted instructional programs, etc. to support your teaching. While many colleges offer some of these support services on a college-wide basis or short term through committees or task forces, in few cases is this support available to the individual instructor. A central objection of faculty to large classes is the amount of information they must handle from so many students. The support services mentioned might ease the burden of large classes while improving effectiveness.

Skimming an article rather than reading each word carefully, or reading a student's paper and evaluating it for overall effect or for one key attribute are legitimate strategies for reducing the amount of information taken in without unduly lowering performance. Faculty must continually decide how much reading to require, the number of papers to be turned in, tests to be given, etc. Embedded in each decision is an implicit assumption about how much information the student and/or the instructor can handle within the time frame allotted. The issue is to determine at what point you reduce the amount of information so far that the quality of instruction suffers.

Katz and Kahn emphasize the negative effect of reducing the amount of information that comes to an individual or an organization from outside the organization. Since this is most often the source of new ideas and new demands or needs, reducing the amount of this information will reduce overall effectiveness and vitality. Yet, people engaged in reflective tasks such as research and writing need to be protected from some of the excess information. Control of internal communication (perhaps restricting memos to one page, staff meetings to one hour, etc.) may help buffer staff.

Handling more and more information without a loss of effectiveness or even burnout has become an essential skill for educators.

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National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development

For further information see Katz, Daniel and Robert Kahn. The Social Psychology of Organizations. New York: Wiley, 1966.

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ASSURING CONTINUITY FOR THE COMPLEX 80's

In his book, Future Shock, Alvin Toffler describes an incident involving a twelve-year-old girl who was sent to a supermarket located just a few blocks from her Manhatten apartment. The young lady had been to that particular store only once or twice before. After about 30 minutes she returned home in a state of confusion. "It must have been torn down," she reported. "I couldn't find it." It turned out that she had taken a wrong turn. But, instead of thinking she was lost, her first assumption was that the building had been demolished.

It's not only American society. The entire world is being swept into an increasingly faster-paced life. Events occur, are reported, and replayed instantly in our living rooms. How do we manage to keep up with the change around us? *Mobility is forcing us to deal with the changes, shifts, and redirections of people's lives.*

Through the daily deluge of news media reports and personal experiences, we have become painfully aware that our future shock has become our current event. Every day we face problems in such basic areas as the price of the food we eat, or the mortgage on the home we want to buy. And, as we become more cognizant that many of our communities are coming apart at the seams, people are disenchanted with leadership, inflation is rampant, shortages threaten--the statistics and projections are staggering--we realize that old answers do not fit new questions.

On a personal level, huge segments of society are coping with new lifestyles resulting from divorce, retirement, or widowhood. Everyone of us has defenses to help protect us from stress--our little "anchors" which help to stabilize us in this chaotic world. But when events begin to occur as rapidly as dominoes fall, our sense of continuity begins to break down. Sometimes, we are set adrift indefinitely.

Continuity, disruption, and readjustment compose a cyclical, ongoing process. *Community colleges can contribute to this cycle by improving the quality of the readjustment process.* The kind of support available will make a big difference in this phase of people's lives. When the community college participates in the readjustment phase, it helps to re-establish continuity in an individual's life. And sometimes the results of the readjustment process actually may improve the quality of life.

Consider Grace, a life-long homemaker whose husband died quite suddenly. Abruptly, Grace was confronted with a loss of continuity in her life: her help-mate of 18 years was gone, and she had to deal with staggering decisions concerning her three children and herself. After a few months of indecision and drifting, Grace enrolled in a course for widows at the community college. Gradually she began to adjust and view her family's options a little more clearly. Grace investigated programs available at the college. Talks with college personnel led her to enroll in the medical technician program. In two years, Grace graduated and began a new career offering intellectual stimulation, personal satisfaction and financial remuneration. She experienced quality readjustment assistance from the community college. Her life stabilized and she resumed her continuity. The cycle begins again.

We can take a next step and examine how disruptions affect businesses. Federal budget cuts almost destroyed "The Company," a professional acting group. For five years, it had been the recipient of various federal grants, but when its funding sources dried up, the group's very existence was threatened. "The Company" turned to the local community college and proposed a joint venture: use of facilities and a portion of the box office in exchange for presenting quality productions and assisting with occasional drama workshops. When the offer was accepted, despite disruption and readjustment, "The Company" maintained its continuity.

Brevard Community College in Cocoa, Florida is an excellent example of an entire institution adapting to change. Brevard and the space program at nearby Cape Canaveral grew up together. The college contributed to fulfilling the needs of the space program's employees and their families, as well as other members of the community. As the space program wound down, Brevard again was ready to respond to community needs. Retraining programs were offered to former NASA employees who wished to remain in Cocoa, but needed to secure other employment. Brevard played a double role: first, it assisted in the readjustment of the entire community. Second, the college assured its own continuity by readjusting internally. Brevard could have lost sizeable enrollment, community support, or status in the community, if it had failed to rebound with programs that were needed immediately.

More and more, the community college should be perceived as a source of stability. It is a rock, an anchor. When people need help, when they simply want a change, when they must readjust, they are turning to their community colleges. Increasingly, community colleges are serving to renew, assist, nourish, encourage, and mobilize their students. To many, the colleges are a source for refreshment.

But let's step back for a moment. All this "good" that we're doing...is it on purpose? As we look around and see the changing patterns of institutions and society, we might ask, "Is our direction evolving because of us or in spite of us?"

Let's examine where we are now. Our state legislators vocally support the equal access and equal opportunity concept. But in practice, they institute enrollment caps and wish fewer people would respond to the community college's invitation. We are involved in a fascinating and frustrating entanglement. For example, a proposed regulation for State appropriations to Florida community colleges says that funds "shall not be used to pay for commercial announcements or any other form of advertising on radio or television." A typical Catch-22 situation. How can we provide equal access and equal opportunity if we cannot disseminate information about programs on a large scale? Lawmakers question the number of times we will educate an individual. They do not recognize that changing life patterns require recurring education.

Like so many established businesses, community colleges are losing their flexibility. Decreased mobility and growth in our faculties, for instance, are resulting in apathy, rigidity, and a retreat to tradition. Also affecting our adaptability is the emerging "typical" student: as the number of college-bound high school graduates continues to decline, the non-traditional student is becoming the norm.

Many of our colleges are not responding as well as they might to their communities, and this may have disastrous results:

NEEDED RESPONSE	IF WE FAIL
• Mobilize community resources	• Exclusion from public policy discussions
• Update college mission	• Reduced services and support
• Identify new target groups	• Reduced effectiveness and community support
• Maintain efficient organizational structure	• College staff frustrated, discouraged, apathetic
• Plan ahead	• Immediate demise of the college

Adaptability is a key attribute of the community college. We can assure continuity despite complexity if we plan strategies that enable us to *respond*.

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STUDENT PULL

How well do we as instructors adapt to our students? Consider the following experiment. In a one-to-one microteaching situation, a teacher trainee was given fifteen minutes to communicate a particular idea or concept to a role-playing listener--a student. The teacher was given specific information about the concept to be taught, the objective, and the student. The listener who had been coached to do so then interjected obstacles at prearranged points in the instructional exchange.

A typical assignment was to communicate the balance of power concept in the federal government during this fifteen minute session. The trainee was first given material describing the checks and balances system. Next he was told he was to meet a Venezuelan immigrant, George Lopez, who wanted to learn more about the idea of balance of power in order to pass his citizenship examination. Before meeting George, he was given a one-page description of him. Then the trainee met with the role-player for the fifteen-minute period and presented the concept in any way that seemed appropriate. The student role-player systematically introduced five obstacles during the exchange. For example, the student might say, "The judges are like priests; they tell us what's right or wrong," or "The president is in charge; he tells everybody what to do."

The responses of the teachers to these obstacles varied enormously. Some were completely unresponsive to the student role player. Other teachers spent at least half of the allotted time getting to know George and his frame of reference before proceeding with an explanation. They drew inductively on George's experiences. For example, since George was a waiter, the instructor might use the analogy of three plates balanced on a tray to represent the three branches of government.

To capture this variation among teachers, I developed an adaptability index. The index included the following rating scale:

RATING	BEHAVIOR
1	Completely insensitive.
3	Aware of obstacle, but does not change.
5	Aware of obstacles and makes some attempt to change.
7	Shifts and changes presentation in flexible fashion.
9	Changes and explores for more information from the student's frame of reference.

Some flavor of the different responses and the general rating process can be observed in the following examples of two obstacles presented by a student player:

Obstacle: "The judges are like priests; they tell us what's right and wrong."

Low Teacher Response (scored 3)	High Teacher Response (scored 7)
"No, they're not like priests because they're appointed to the Supreme Court by the President and must then be approved by the Legislature."	"In a sense, that's true, but they have no religious power; it doesn't matter what religion they are, but they do tell us what's right and wrong according to the Constitution."

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Obstacle: "This sounds like it takes a long time...wouldn't it be better to have a revolution?"

Low (scored 2)	High (scored 9)
"No, no, why did you say revolution? I noticed that your country has been plagued by revolutions. But you see, the Constitution of the United States with these three separate branches of power is the longest standing written constitution in the world."	"It might be simpler, but I don't know that the results would be as good. What do you think? In your country do you have revolutions? Was the country better off after the revolution?"

The way a teacher adapts to students is the heart of the teaching/learning process, yet it remains poorly understood. Attempting to describe moment-to-moment shifts in teacher behavior in response to an individual student, or a group of students reveals the number of times the teacher is influenced by an effect I have named "student pull." Teachers' adaptations to students vary enormously. Some teachers change their approaches to suit their students more readily than others. Some adapt more effectively than others. Some adapt to students in relation to immediate circumstances; others adapt in relation to their goals for the student's long-term development. But whatever the form of change, teachers are constantly adapting. I would make a conservative estimate that a hundred such adaptations may occur in an hour of instruction!

Reviewing the effects of student pull analyzed in five different studies is instructive. For example, with students of low ability, teachers tended to use more single words than longer explanations, shorter sentences, and greater repetition. Students with higher conceptual abilities were taught using more interdependent statements. When teaching older students, higher level information statements were offered by teachers, and one study showed that there was less negotiation permitted with older students. When positive or negative classroom behaviors were measured, students who were positive in their behaviors were offered more clarification by teachers. Students with negative tendencies were criticized more often and were frequently given directions.

I would suggest that the more an instructor can first "read" or interpret the behaviors of students in the classroom and then change her actions, or "flex" to adapt to those student behaviors, the better a teacher she will be. The key is to be able to match a student's behavior with an appropriate teaching approach. Although our research has not established normative responses to specific kinds of student pull, we are able to measure a teacher's skill in interpreting behavior and changing teaching strategies in the classroom. The more sophisticated our measurement abilities become, the better able we'll be to facilitate the development of such skills. Video feedback, microteaching, modeling, and of controlled exposure to a variety of student pull techniques are approaches that can be developed and used to build an instructor's flexing skills. Of one thing I am reasonably sure: we cannot cultivate these skills by giving pre-packaged lectures. Teachers must be sufficiently flexible in classroom activity to be able to effectively adapt to students who are pulling them in a new direction in the instructional environment.

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For further information see Hunt, David E. "Teachers' Adaptation: 'Reading' and 'Flexing' to Students," Journal of Teacher Education 42 (Spring 1976).

Karen Watkins, Editor
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SOME THOUGHTS ON FACULTY EVALUATION

Perhaps one of the hottest topics in higher education is evaluation of faculty: who should do it, how it should be done, and for what purpose should it be used. Part of the problem with evaluation might be related to the problem of defining the aims of education and the difficulty of measuring whether or not those aims have been reached once they have been defined. If the community colleges have agreed, however, that their prime function is teaching and not research, then it becomes imperative that we develop valid ways to measure teaching effectiveness. A first step in developing valid evaluation processes would be to challenge some of our present assumptions about evaluation:

Good teaching is impossible to define. We must get beyond the notion that evaluation is for the purpose of judging teacher performance as though the teacher were an actor on a stage and nothing more. Evaluation should focus on the outcomes of education--the results of the entire process, intended or not.

Peers and administrators are good judges of teaching, but students are not. The research shows that as a rule, student evaluations of classroom performance are much more reliable than peer evaluations. Confusion has arisen over the use of evaluation for personnel decisions, and no faculty has wanted to rely on student evaluations when the reality is that peers and administrators make the employment decisions. It is not true, though, that students will give the highest ratings to teachers who give the highest grades and there is no evidence to support the fear that student evaluation has led to a lowering of standards and the general demise of higher education.

Evaluation should be limited to classroom performance. There is more to effective teaching than entertaining a room full of people two or three times per week. Effective teaching includes relevant texts and other materials, a meaningful syllabus, effective interaction with students on an advising basis, conscientious committee work for the good of the entire institution, and meaningful contributions to the community as a whole.

Perhaps these alternative assumptions should be made about evaluation:

Different groups should evaluate different aspects of the educational process. If student evaluations are a reliable gauge of teaching in the classroom, then that is the component for which they should be used. Perhaps peers and administrators should stay out of the classroom. Instead, they would be the ones to judge the written materials and learning objectives, and the contributions of the faculty member to the college as a whole, and the ones with whom the self evaluations are discussed. They would also be the ones to guide the professional development process.

Evaluation should be tied to professional development. If we agree that the purpose of evaluation is for the improvement of the educational process, then opportunities for faculty development should be provided and expected by the institution. Not only should each institution plan and hold inservice development activities based on identified needs of the faculty, but whenever possible the institution should also provide the funds for faculty to attend meetings and conferences off campus.

Self evaluation should be a major component of any evaluation process. For growth to occur, each instructor should articulate the answers to questions such as: Did I meet my goals and objectives as set at the beginning of the term? If so, what worked the

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ASSESSMENT, SOC 0

best? If not, what didn't work? What were the attrition and attendance rates in my classes? Why? What can I do to improve them? What is my response to my student evaluations? Do I agree with them? Why or why not? How much did I vary my teaching methods to fit the needs of the students in my classes? What did my students learn this term? What other contributions did I make to the college this term? Any evaluation system should be specifically designed for the institution where it is to be used. What works at a community college in California may not work at a technical college in Nebraska. Some of the principles will remain the same, but each institution should create its own, unique evaluation of progress toward that institution's goals and of each faculty member's contribution to their achievement.

Evaluation must be a *continuous, humane process*, devoted to instructional and organizational improvement and based on cooperation between faculty and administrators. One example is offered by Jackson State Community College in Jackson, Tennessee. Three of their purposes are similar to most evaluation models: (1) create a constructive environment which can foster student success, (2) improve faculty performance, and (3) create an equitable means of using evaluation for employment decisions. A fourth purpose they have added is to create a means by which the relationship between faculty evaluation and faculty development is understood and make the two components interdependent. Other fundamental concepts include:

> Evaluation is done in those areas for which faculty have primary responsibility. (Classroom instruction, syllabus development, academic advising, college service, and faculty development). If a faculty member chooses, evaluation can be minimally expanded into other selected areas.
>
> Several sources of evaluation are used. Students evaluate classroom instruction, peers evaluate syllabus development, and administrators evaluate the remaining areas. In addition, self evaluation is used in all areas.
>
> The outcomes of evaluation are expressed in one of three levels of performance, which are criterion referenced. Criteria are identified, defined, and categorized. The degree to which they are met then determines the level of performance ("Needs improvement," "Expected performance," "Exceptional performance").
>
> Faculty evaluation is a dynamic and ongoing process. A college faculty committee annually reviews the process and continually works toward its improvement.

An integral part of Jackson State's evaluation system is faculty development, with emphasis on the improvement of instruction. Therefore, the college annually sponsors a program of activities based on faculty needs. Faculty participation is required.

Finally, what is there to discover about faculty evaluation? There is little agreement on method, but a general agreement on the need for it; the fastest way to make many faculty break out in a nervous sweat is to mention evaluation in the same breath with professional development; the quickest way to sabotage a new evaluation system or concept is to have it explained in a memo to the faculty which comes from the President; and in spite of all the literature explaining how to do things correctly, we administrators still blunder along making mistakes ("Hi, Dan. Come on in so that we can discuss your evaluation. I don't think your house will be too hard to sell, do you?") which do nothing to lower the association of evaluation with a sledge hammer--the threat to conform or else. But with enough of us optimists around, someday we will be able to talk about evaluation without stuttering, or apologizing, or justifying.

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For further information on the Jackson State Community College model contact Dr. Robert A. Harrell, Dean of Academic Affairs, P. O. Box 2467, Jackson, Tennessee 38301, 901/424-3520.

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A COGNITIVE LEARNING MODEL

In 1975, Jefferson Community College in Louisville, Kentucky initiated a remediation project with grant funds provided by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education. The project was based on the premise that *there are identifiable cognitive skills necessary for successful completion of freshman level science courses.* The project further assumed that *these skills may be needed for successful completion of many college level courses.* The object was to develop a cognitive diagnostic test to measure the skill levels of students using our model. Then audio-tutorial cognitive skill programs were developed from the model to remediate these students with poor skills.

THE COGNITIVE MODEL

The cognitive model*, from which the 40 question Cognitive Diagnostic Test is derived, is as follows:

Language

- Verbally Defined Language: The ability to define words in terms of other words
- Visual/Abstract Language: The ability to produce mental images in response to words or symbols and to relate symbols to real objects or to one another

Reasoning

- Pattern Recognition: The ability to recognize verbal and/or visual patterns and see the relationships in these patterns
- Classification and Elementary Logic: The ability to see generalities and specifics and place information into appropriate categories
- Logic Interaction: The ability to draw logical conclusions from work and visual/abstract relationship problems

In addition to the cognitive skills for which there are test items available, there are three skills placed into the model as:

General Preparation for Coursework

- Discovery or ownership of responsibility in the educational process
- Memory
- Presupposition or recognition that information processing skills and information builds throughout a learning endeavor

TEACHING TOWARD COGNITIVE SKILLS

The Cognitive Model and accompanying Cognitive Skills Diagnostic Test may be used in a variety of ways in the classroom. You may design instructional units for classes to provide practice in these skills. Course information may be sequenced to introduce language concepts first, and then progress to information that involves classification, patterning and logical interaction. Students in need of remediation can be identified through the diagnostic test and given special assignments to build language and reasoning skills.

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*The language component of the model is empirically derived, while the reasoning component has extensive statistical verification through the Cognitive Diagnostic Test.

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PLANNING, SOC 0

At Jefferson, we offer basic cognitive development for students whose entry reading levels are poor and who could profit from a special learning laboratory environment. Audio-tutorial programs have been produced for each of the cognitive skill areas. For example, the area Visual/Abstract Language contains three programs: Visual Language, Abstract Language and Simple Visual Relationships. Pattern Recognition, on the other hand, contains six programs, one of which is Elements of Discovery, which encourages students to take responsibility for learning.

Students may enroll in a special Cognitive Skill Learning Laboratory or use the laboratory on a drop-in-basis. Once in the Learning Laboratory, students are introduced to staff and to the lab facilities, and when a rapport is established, they are given the Cognitive Diagnostic Test. Student answers are entered by hand into the computer, and a computer printout with scores in five cognitive areas is generated. These printouts are used in student conferences to establish the work s/he is expected to accomplish toward cognitive skill remediation.

Students begin the assigned programs by the third class meeting, taking the audio-tutorial programs, having study guides checked for remediation of a particular skill, playing commercial games to reinforce the skill, and finally, being tested by a computer test for the skill before going on to the next audio-tutorial program.

Data from students in the Cognitive Learning Laboratory course indicate that students who take the cognitive skills programs in addition to a reading course show a significantly greater improvement than those who take the reading course alone.

While the learning laboratory setting is surely not the only way for students to gain improvement in cognitive skills, it does provide a means by which students can work on specific skills and progress at their own pace before entering the traditional educational program. However they are taught, though, direct instruction of cognitive skills can greatly enhance students' present and long-term learning.

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For further information

The Cognitive Diagnostic Test and the Cognitive Remedial Programs (in script form) are available upon request from the author.

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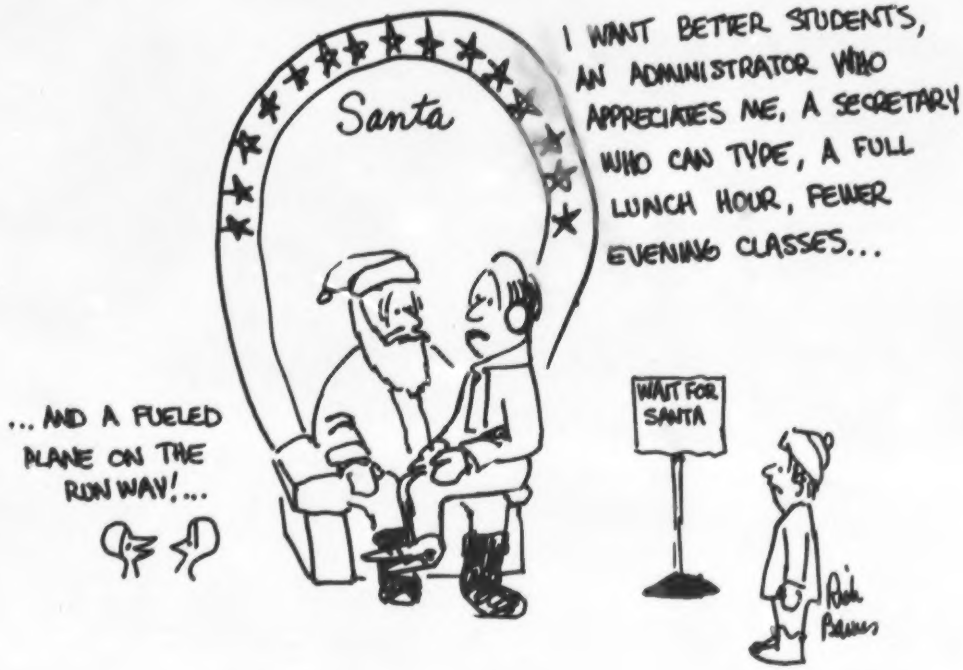
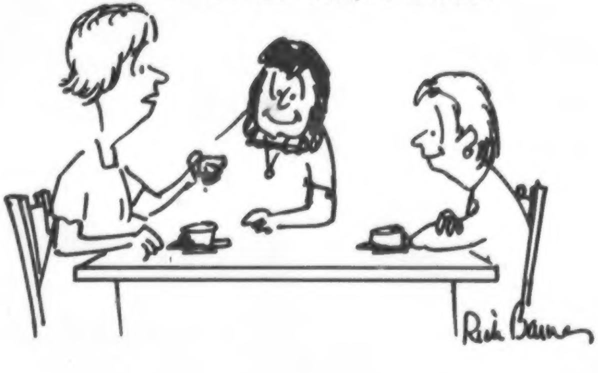
HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM NISOD


Santa
I WANT BETTER STUDENTS, AN ADMINISTRATOR WHO APPRECIATES ME, A SECRETARY WHO CAN TYPE, A FULL LUNCH HOUR, FEWER EVENING CLASSES...
... AND A FUELED PLANE ON THE RUNWAY! ...
WAIT FOR SANTA
Rick Barnes

"...ONE OF MY STUDENTS GAVE ME THIS BEAUTIFUL WATCH FOR CHRISTMAS...
...DO YOU THINK IT'S HOT?"


Rick Barnes

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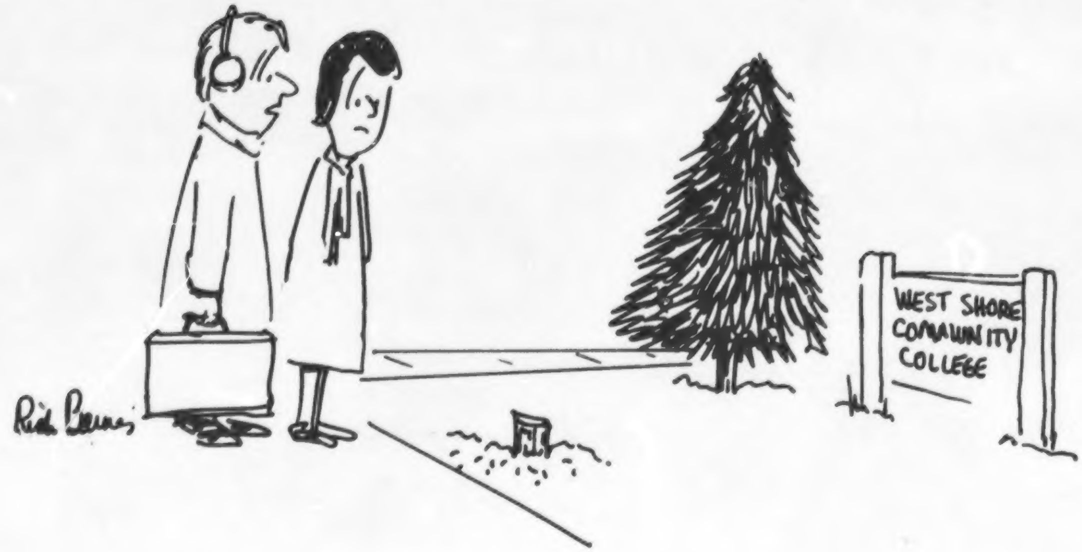
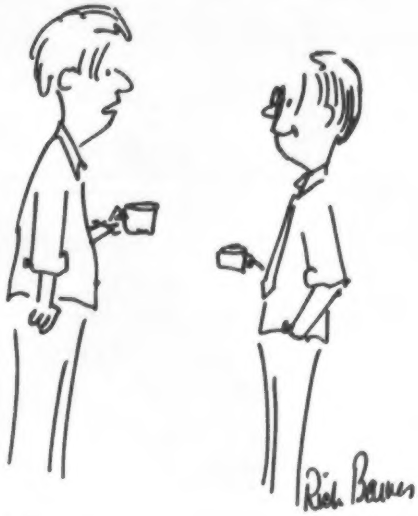
SPECIAL ISSUE

"NOW YOU KNOW WHY THE DEAN DISCOURAGES US FROM HAVING CHRISTMAS TREES IN THE CLASSROOMS."



I USED TO LOOK FORWARD TO CHRISTMAS BUT NOW I LOOK FORWARD TO CHRISTMAS BREAK!



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Rich Barnes is a free lance cartoonist. You can see much more of Rich's work in the modules of The Creative Teaching Series published by Media Systems, Inc. available from your campus staff development officer or academic dean.

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